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Dave Coccarell returns to the big screen with John Dens at the First. His crooked horror head trip ykt, featuring inter-dimensional drug use, zombie-slaving slickers, a silent monster and so, so much more. **PLUS:** Paul Giamatti discusses collaborating with Coccarell, and author David Wong traces how John Dens went from online to on screens. by JOHN W. BOWER, DAVE ALEXANDER and MONICA S. KUEHLER

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# Treadlines

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS — HORROR HAPPENINGS

## GEORGE NOORY MARKS A DECADE OF STRANGE RADIO ON COAST TO COAST AM

As at January 1, 2013, George Noory celebrates ten years of investigating alien abductions, ghost stories, mystery enigmas and government conspiracies, thanks to his hosting gig on popular radio show *Coast to Coast AM*. Created by Art Bell in 1988, the four-hour program, which airs from 11 to 5 a.m. E.S.T., can be heard on more than 560 stations in the United States, Canada and Guam. Over the years, the Sherman Oaks, California-based show has become an outpost for callers and guests to discuss conspiracy theories, the paranormal and the unexplained.

"All my life, I've had a fascination with the paranormal and the unusual," explains Noory. "I like to look for answers first and foremost. What I don't want to do is spend my nights hurting the dreams of my callers or destroying my guests because I don't believe what they're saying. The show is about the audience and the conversation I want to approach everything with an open mind, maybe I'll be a little sceptical, but I'm not there to destroy anyone."

Noory's interest in paranormal phenomena goes back to when he was thirteen-years-old and his mother gave him a book called *We Are Not Alone: The Continuing Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence*, by Walter Sullivan. He eventually got a job at WCAR-AM in Detroit, where he conducted interviews centred around the paranormal, before landing a gig as a television news executive in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where his interest in unexplained phenomena brought him in contact with Bell. Noory served as a frequent guest host and eventually became the regular host following Bell's retirement in 2003.

Since then, Noory has discussed the appearance of the Virgin Mary of Fatima with Father Nicholas Gruner, explored crop circles with Dr. Seneo Hein and examined medium-day vampires with "energy vampire" Michelle Belanger. No subject is too arcane or too esoteric for him, and over the past decade, he's delved into such topics as ancient



George Noory has investigated everything from aliens to zombies as host of *Coast to Coast AM*

relics and mysteries (Noory has also appeared on the History Channel's *Ancient Aliens* series), hauntings, demonic possessions, UFO sightings, cryptozoology, zombies and government conspiracies, among other topics. He expanded the show into other areas as well, including healthcare, weight loss and holistic medicine.

But the cornerstone of *Coast to Coast AM* remains the mysterious and the bizarre – the things that go bump in the night.

"People like a good story, a good mystery," affirms Noory, "and the one thing that everyone has in common is that one day we're all going to die. There's the universal question: what happens after death? The older you get, the more you think about it. Many people like to believe that there are spirits out there, that there are hauntings. It gives people hope."

In addition to his broadcasting career, Noory has published three books: two self-help books, *Wander in the Light: Unlock Your Five Senses and Liberate Your Limitless Potential* (2006, with co-author

William J. Barnes) and *Journey to the Light* (2009, also with Barnes), and a book of spirit communications, *Talking to the Dead* (2011, with co-author Rosemary Ellen Bailey).

One of his favorite topics to explore, though, is cryptozoology.

"I enjoy the mystery, the contemplation of things like Bigfoot, the Loch Ness Monster, chupacabras, all of those things," says Noory. "Part of me would love to see proof that the Loch Ness Monster is a plesiosaur. The mystery of the unknown is what's exciting. How disappointing would it be for it to be revealed as just an ordinary cat?"

Every night, Noory speaks to callers and guests with outrageous stories, some more believable than others, and he admits that there have been times when on-air conversations have left him spooked after the show has ended.

"After some programs, you find yourself looking in the mirror, aware of the cat, and you're hoping you don't see another cat at eyes looking back at you."

DAN MURPHY



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# AXELLE CAROLYN MAKES FEATURE DEBUT WITH GHOST STORY *SOULMATE*



Actress-turned-filmmaker Axelle Carolyn is currently in production on her first feature film. Carolyn's husband, director Neil Marshall (*The Descent*, *Dog Soldiers*), is serving as executive producer on *Soulmate*, which was announced a couple of years ago under the working title *Ghosts of Slaughterford* but after some false starts didn't begin shooting until late 2012.

"It's been a long time coming," says Carolyn, who previously appeared in Marshall's *Centurion* and *Doomsday*, during a break in filming. "The script has come on by leaps and bounds. It's a different incarnation now: an evolution of the idea that I started writing over three years ago. It actually feels like a blessing that it crashed last year, although it didn't quite feel that way at the time! It's now much more contained, and I've had time to make some more short films in between, so although I would have been fine before, I'm feeling a lot more confident."

*Soulmate* has many of the trappings of a classic ghost story, including its setting: an atmospheric, 17th-century cottage in the Brecon Beacons national park in Wales. Thanks to a late-year shoot during an unusually severe British November, which saw record rainfall and subzero temperatures, there was never a need for the dry-dry machine to leave its box.

"The genesis of the story was realizing that England has a really rich history of ghost stories,

but that all the best recent films in that genre have been Spanish," Carolyn explains. "I wanted to bring the ghost story back here, so it's ironic that we've ended up in Wales rather than England. But Wales has houses like this one!"

A rather more neutral holiday cottage by trade, the house has been decked out with strange artwork and plenty of taxidermy for the duration of the shoot.

"People keep saying the house is another character in the film, and I'm not sure quite what that means," Carolyn notes. "But it's a huge part of the atmosphere, that's for sure. The owner swears that it's really haunted and that she hears stuff all the time..."

Story-wise, *Soulmate* involves concert musician Audrey (Anna Walton: *Hulboy* & *The Golden Army*), who suffers a trauma and travels to the mountains both to heal and hide. Once there, she meets a previous resident of the house, Douglas (Tom Wudlowski: *300*)—deceased but somehow still around.

"It's almost irrelevant that he's a ghost," says Walton, who found herself high on Carolyn's casting wishlist after she acted in the director's short *The Halloween Kid*. "The point is that Audrey's finding living in the real world very difficult. When she's here with the ghost, it's like a safe little bubble. There's a theme about finding comfort in the supernatural, and in things that



*Soulmate*: (from top) Audrey (Anna Walton) explores the film's creepy cottage, and Axelle Carolyn directs

aren't necessarily considered normal. And I like that a ghost is supposed to be scary thing, but in this instance he's actually a comforting presence."

Carolyn agrees that, to her, ghosts are not so much frightening as tragic. "It's that idea that they're kind of stuck here, in between worlds," the filmmaker says. "I wanted to explore that inherent melancholy. It starts off as a very classical *The Omen* sort of thing, but then it goes much more into being a sort of psychological drama. I don't think it quite earns the title of horror."

Then how does she explain the exploding head being crafted in the makeup room? "Oh, it's not exploding," Carolyn offers. "It's just torn apart."

OWEN WILLIAMS



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# UNEARTHED PHANTOM FOOTAGE SUGGESTS IT'S FIRST FILM SHOT FOR 3-D



Nearly 90 years after its release, Universal's earliest horror feature, *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925), is still revealing secrets. As film historians continue to search for lost scenes and a 1930s sound version of the movie, a recent discovery has put it in the running for the distinction of being the first Hollywood feature ever shot in 3-D.

Florida filmmaker Carl Hertz uncovered what appeared to be part of a 3-D version of the film in 2010, while gathering footage for use in his own short movie project. Although his archive guide explained that early silent films were often shot with two cameras on the set in order to produce domestic and international versions of the film, and he'd showed him two frames from different versions of *Phantom*, Hertz, a lifelong 3-D enthusiast, noticed something familiar about the images.

"I used a cross-eyed viewing technique on the two frames right there and then and noticed that when they came together I was seeing stereo, or 3-D."

Although historians have known about the dual footage for decades, the idea that the two cameras on set were aligned properly to create a stereoscopic image has been discredited. While it is quite possible that the filmmakers unwittingly captured *The Phantom* in 3-D by fluke, Hertz remains convinced that they intentionally shot it with 3-D in mind. To prove his theory, he did a 3-D restoration of the film, dubbed *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra: Version Stéréoscopique*, and premiered it as a work-in-progress for a limited time online in October. A high-definition theatric release is planned for Christmas 2013.

"I didn't believe I had done anything special at first because I was sure many others before me had seen this 3-D effect decades before I did," he says. "It was only later after doing some research that I discovered this was totally unheard of for this film... I couldn't believe that I made what would turn out to be such a crucial discovery for such an important film in movie history."

JASON PICHONSKY

## ENTRAILS

Guillermo del Toro has confirmed: he is in discussions with DC Comics about *Warner's Secret*, a project that will bring together a team of supernatural comic heroes. Though plans are in their earliest stages, reports suggest that the film would include characters such as Swamp Thing, John Constantine, Greenman, and Ripken the Demon. Speaking about the project, del Toro recently told MTV, "I've been pursuing doing something with them for years, many years. Hopefully it'll come to pass."

Children's horror author R.L. Stine has written four audio stories that are available to listen to free, via his website [stine.com](http://stine.com). The tales can be found in the "Reiny Night Theatre" area of the site and selected via an image of an old-fashioned radio. Each story is around ten minutes in length and acted out complete with spooky sound effects. Stine said the stories will be "up for a long time" for the continued enjoyment of his fans.

David Fincher and Eric Powell's Kickstarter campaign to make *The Gooch* has reached its goal. The duo raised \$441,600 to make a feature-length film based on the Dark Horse Comics

title, more than \$40,000 above their original goal. Fans who pledged capital received such goodies as select issues of comic books, movie posters, art prints, and exclusive records to *The Gooch* production blog, and all will be invited to a screening of the completed test reel in Los Angeles (date yet to be determined).

Alan Moore has teamed up with director Mitch Jenkins to create a new series of loosely related shorts under the moniker *The Show Produced by Lou Projects*, the occult-themed films will be Moore's first work written specifically for the screen and will explore an alternate universe set in his hometown of Northampton. The first short film, *Jenny's End*, promises a weird, screwy, noir style and though details are scarce, Moore has said it concerns a writer and an occultist trying to take over the dream-life of everyone at the bar, though before extending their influence over the country and the world. *Jenny's*

End will premiere on November 25 on VICE's digital channel, Motherboard TV.

MGM is developing a remake of Charles B. Pierce's 1976 cult horror film *The Town That Dreaded Sundown* about a small community that's being stalked by a serial killer. While the company had no comment on the film as of press time, *Variety* reports that the studio has been asking agents about potential writers for the project. The news follows a current reboot trend at MGM, as they prepare to release several remakes, including *Carrie*, *The Abominable Snowman*, and *Mercutio*.

BMGF Studios has announced that it will be reuniting the *Hellraiser* comic next February with new series *Hellraiser: Dark Watch*. Clive Barker and Braden Bellert will unite as co-writers for the comic, which seeks to update the *Hellraiser* mythos in order to tell new stories within it. This duo will be joined by newcooper Tom Decker, who will be doing the art.

CHARLOTTE STEAR

## MONSTRO BIZARRO

Slight researchers have announced plans to take their hunt for the occult horrid to new heights—literally. A new study, dubbed the Falcon Project, proposes to track down evidence of the creature using a sophisticated helium-filled balloon (a.k.a. a blimp). According to the project's website ([the-falconproject.com](http://the-falconproject.com)), the blimp will be deployed to areas that have a high concentration of occultic sightings. There, it will attempt to locate the alleged creature by means of thermal imaging and high-resolution videography, headed by William Barnes and Juan Valero—both of whom claim personal Bliphot sightings—along with famed professor of ontology and anthropology Dr. Jeff Malinin. The study has the advantage of technology which "eliminates the noise produced by conventional aircraft and on-the-ground investigators, allowing studying approach to very exclusive spaces." The project is expected to cost in excess of \$300,000.

LYNLE BLACKDAIR

WIKI: MONSTRO BIZARRO AT [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monstro\\_Bizarro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monstro_Bizarro)

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# CORONER'S REPORT

WEIRD STATS & MORBID FACTS

GAME NO. 130

A Brazilian groom bled to death at his own wedding in November after he tripped and fell on a beer glass, which broke and severed his femoral artery.

Stephen King's son Joe King — now better known as author Joe Hill — played the character of Billy in the weirdland segment of 1982's *Greasybear*.

A recent study conducted by medical professionals determined that early risers were most likely to die around 11 a.m., while night owls were most likely to check out around 6 p.m.

Up until one hour before Clive Barker's baptism, his name was to be Nigel, but his grandmother, who hated it, left the building and returned with another name she'd heard outside: "Clive."

Some 219 people have died scaling Mount Everest between 1922 and 2018, almost all of their bodies remain on the mountainside.

John Lennon was murdered on December 8, 1968, as he was walking into the Dakota, the same building in which *Rosemary's Baby* was filmed.

This past Halloween, a British man accidentally handed out several bags of cocaine instead of candy to trick-or-treaters. The children's father, a police officer found the drugs before they degraded them.

The first studio to show interest in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* was the Walt Disney Company, but the owners that he wanted Wes Craven to tone down the content to make it suitable for children and pretenses, which Craven, of course, declined.

Estelle Cernacek was sentenced to life in prison after she admitted in a Victim courtroom to killing both her ex-husband and a lover and burying them in the basement of her sex-onion store.

The roller coaster used in *Final Destination 3* is the Corkscrew at Playland in Vancouver, Canada. The actors had to ride it 20 times in order to film the premonition scene.

A Swedish woman was charged with "violating the peace with the deceased" after police found human skeletal remains in her apartment, along with a CD called "My Necrophile" and photos of her being affectionate with the skulls. The woman claims she acquired the bones legally.

The sound of the demon leaving Regan's body in *The Exorcist* was created using the real sound of pigs being herded for slaughter.

Two Russian fishermen are accused of murdering and cannibalizing at least one fellow angler who was lost in Siberia with them for three months. Police discovered trucked-up remains that they believe to be one of two still-missing men. The survivors fled after being questioned by authorities.

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## BODY HORROR

NASEL GOODES DIACULA

ARTIST: Evan Din ([evandinart.com](http://evandinart.com))

"I'm a fellow artist who specializes in realistic horror imagery. Basil Goode's monster movie graphics have had a huge influence on the development of my style. I found it both extremely fun and a bit intimidating using a palette by one of my favorite artists as reference. I had a blast capturing [Goode's] whirling storm through the expressive colour and brushwork."



## THE RUCOMINGUE SICK TOP SIX

### GEIN-FIEND BRUESOMENESS



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PINNED DOWN, PIERCED AND PEEL
3. **MANIAC**  
FRANK SECURES A SCALP
4. **TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE III**  
HUNG UP AND BLEED OUT
5. **THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE**  
PIAN HANGS AROUND WITH LEATHERFACE
6. **THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS**  
BUFFALO BILL'S EPIDERMIS DANCE

**TORTURED TROGLINES**

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## CRYPTIC COLLECTIBLES

### GENERAL MILLS MONSTERS FIGURES

(Product People like 1975)

In the '70s, General Mills monster mascots Count Chocula, Franken Berry, Boo Berry and Fruit Gums made the jump from cereal boxes to toy form. Standing nearly eight inches tall, the soft, squeezable vinyl figures were part of a line called Big G Product People, which included other cereal mascots such as Snap, Crackle

and Pop and the Trix Rabbit. Available via mail order, the figures (which at the time sold for \$9.49 each) now go for up to \$100 each in undamaged condition, and \$250 each with their original window-box packaging.

JAMES RUPRELL



IN THE CRYPTIC COLLECTIBLES AT 100-1000000

Illustration: (clockwise from top left) © 1975

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## IT'S TIME TO PLAY

Distributed By Anchor Bay Entertainment. Screenplay by  
Lucy and Sky McCole Bertusick. Screenplay by Lucy and  
Sky McCole Bertusick. Screenplay by Lucy and Sky McCole Bertusick.  
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John David Washington's *Excellent Adventure*: John (Rob Moran) jumps to another dimension, and Jesse (Jesse Plemons) as the Ray character

give him. When meeting their favorite filmmakers, horror fans are often taken aback by how seemingly inconceivable these people are with their best-known work. Wes Craven, for example, is charming, well-mannered and unbelievably articulate, qualities often attributed to his background as a college teacher, while Rob Moran is a soft-spoken, off-beat, gentle soul who's also a veritable walking film encyclopedia. Craven himself is another example; the man behind some of our beloved genre's most brutally plotted films — frequently laced with graphic violence and prick-attack humor — is an affable, funny and utterly unpretentious guy who truly appreciates his fans, and whose subtly veiled imagination isn't always immediately evident, although it's never far away if he feels the need to call upon it. So is he secretly batshit crazy? Maybe. batshit crazy like a fox — you be the judge.

For a guy who toady admits he's had many crushing disappointments in recent years, from an agonizing series of near misses getting a final *Plemons* chapter financed despite massive public demand, to the more recent collapse of a promised *Rob Moran* sequel, he's very upbeat and confident about his newest film, and with good reason. *Rob Moran* got in touch with the filmmaker, who was clearly relishing a rest from all the road-tripping while counting down to the Jan. 25 release of *John David*, to ask him, just what the hell are you



**IN ENGLAND, EVERYONE—EVERYONE—DESCRIBES IT AS 'BATSHIT CRAZY!'**

#### How did you first encounter John David and what was the appeal?

I got an email from a robot at Amazon. It said that if I liked the last book I'd ordered from them, then I'd like *John David* at the End. So then I read the logline, and it was amazing: the street drug called *Sey Saus*, travel between dimensions, a silent otherworldly mission — and the heroes were two college dropout doctors who couldn't hold down jobs, and the tale of humanity felt to them. Plus, it also had, in my opinion, the greatest title of any piece of literature or film that's ever been. So I clicked "buy," paid eleven dollars, and even the first couple of pages started off like an epic adventure in a really cool modern way. I thought David Wang's dialogue was fantastic. The characters' voices seemed as contemporary to me. The first chunk of it was almost a movie in itself. Then it took a left turn when they went to Vegas and it became increasingly unfilmable, but then it came around to a very interesting

ending, and I had a notion about how I could maybe see the front section and the ending and grab a few things from the middle. While I was reading it I'd gotten to know Paul Giamatti. We were trying to mount a sequel to *Rob Moran*, and having some difficulty but I immediately saw a role in *John David* he could play — journalist Arnie Blondestone — that would be the glue that holds the story together. So then the only challenge was to track down this David Wang and see if I could convince him to let me make a movie of his book.

#### And did he take much convincing?

No, not once I got him on the phone. At the time, he was running his own comedy website called *pantheon-westcoast.com*. Subsequently, he was hired by *cracked.com*, and he's now the senior editor. But I tracked him through his original comedy website, and got no response. Another email, no response. I was like a thousand-yard stare in the gate to start and the gate's not opening! The guy's not calling me back, and I was flipping out because I thought this could make a great movie. Why won't the guy call me back? Then I finally got him on the phone and said, "Why did it take you so long?" And he told me that he was a big fan of *Plemons* and *Rob Moran*, and he thought one of his friends was opening on him and that the comics were preposterous because I was saying that I thought *John David* was the greatest book ever written and that I was eager to talk to him. But he's a very cool guy and he quickly agreed to let me take his baby and make a movie from it, which was a really wonderful leap of faith on his part. And I'm glad that I haven't disappointed him.

#### So he's generally been happy with what you did?

Yes. I invited him to join us onstage at the Sundance Film Festival. He launched into about a ten-minute talk and about halfway through I'm thinking, "Does he like the movie or not?" But eventually he said that he genuinely liked it, which was a fantastic relief, because that was the second real adaptation I've done of an author. On *Rob Moran*, I was extremely grateful that Jon Landis was satisfied with the result.

Given your long-standing existence on a literary, was the success of *Rob Moran* a game changer for you, or had you always

been again in adapting outside material?

Oh, I'd always been open to it. Technically, in fact, I also adapted Andre Norton's *The Berserker*, although I basically took the idea of a man who had [communicated] abilities with animals in some sort of situation of conflict, and I took it from 1000 years in the future into 3000 years in the past, and made it original, except for that germ of an idea. I started off always writing my own scripts, but we're talking about two ways of going about it and both can be extremely satisfying. Technically, I think it's a lot easier to adapt something, but maybe I'm getting lazy in my old age. You know, there are many directors who never write or even adapt their own material. But nobody's ever come to me with a terrific screenplay as a slatter along with five or six million dollars and said, "Go make this." That does happen to some directors, just never to me! [Laughs] So I have to build things from the ground up. Certainly the fun thing about adaptation is that you can make movies in worlds that you wouldn't necessarily know about yourself. For instance, Joe Lansdale's brilliance in conceiving this drama about Elvis in a real home—who also, but Lansdale would think that up? So executing what had been his vision was a load of fun. And it was the same with *John Doe*.

Once again you were dealing with a low budget on *John Doe*, even though it's practically bursting at the seams with monsters and all manner of demanding special effects. Did you ever consider making it a more "straight" film? What were the biggest challenges?

Oh, we had to make it with modest means, but I take great pains to design my films as expansively as I can. Sometimes I get a little irritated when I read reviews—and this goes for all my movies—and they talk about "B-movies" and all that. I make inexpensive movies, not cheap movies. The big challenges on *John Doe* were twofold. First, we weren't going to be able to afford stars, so we made a leap of faith and went with a couple of unknowns to carry the movie. And yet we were able to surround them with some recognizable faces in the supporting roles. That worked out well, because we were so lucky to find these two [lead] actors—they were terrific, and really good people. Second, the effects were like a big cloud hanging over me. I said, "I'm going to

FULFILLING HIS DREAM TO WORK WITH DON COSCARELLI, PAUL GIAMATTI STOPS INTO THE SCEPTICAL SHOES OF REPURPOSED NAME BLOODSTONE FOR JOHN DOE AT THE END

# IN THE MIDST OF MADNESS

By DAVID BLOOMBERG

**W**HEN PAUL GIAMATTI WAS GROWING UP ON THE JERSEY SHORE, HIS ELDER BROTHER SPOKE HIM INTO PHANTASIA AND OPENED A DOOR INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION OF IMAGINATION

"There was a strong sense of real wonder and terror around that movie, it had to be seen, especially as we all liked to be scared," recalls the sword-wielding actor of the movie's reputation. "It didn't disappoint. It scared the shit out of me. And I have always remembered being very impressed by the sense of other-dimensional creatures, the cosmic dimension of the horror—John Doe at the end, obviously, less that in apocalypses. There of course I saw *Doppel Me-Up*, when I was an adult. Words are inadequate, I think that is a truly brilliant film in every sense of the word. It transcends genre for me and just exists on its own plane entirely. There's this huge scope to *Dark* films that I love, a sense that they move beyond and continue to exist beyond the confines of the story and the screen. Don't know how he does it, but I like it a lot."

After remembering in an interview that he'd always wanted to work with Coscarelli, the director got hold of him and they decided to collaborate on the sequel to *Doppel Me-Up*, called *Doppel Bloodstone*. Giamatti was set to play Oliver, controlling manager, Colonel Tom Parker, but the project fell apart. Later, when Coscarelli stumbled upon David Wong's novel *John Doe at the End*, Giamatti came on board as both producer and co-star after getting a taste of the surreal story.

"It is simultaneously profound, absurd, darkly mind-bending and scary," he says of the novel's appeal, which he likens to the work of writer Douglas Adams (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*). "And of course the movie also has all the kind of nuances, middle American details and a sense of gritty reality that reminds me of Stephen King. [John] had the elements that felt like a Philip K. Dick novel—a machine, time physics. I guess you could call them. Unconventional people thrust into very challenging circumstances that raise actual philosophical questions."

Giamatti (pictured looking at Coscarelli) plays rapper Arnie Bloodstone, the ridiculous journalist who meets up with Dave (Chris Williams) at a Chinese restaurant to hear his back-story of the drug *Soy Sauce*, which opens the road to a world full of monsters, alternate realities, time travel and other tripped-out notions—perfectly at home in a Coscarelli movie.

Arnie exists in the story as the viewers' surrogate, taking in all the insanity, simultaneously sceptical and curious. What could he take a first-hand glimpse of an otherworldly thing that shocks him out of his disbelief?

"Arnie is the framing device, pure and simple; that's his function," explains Giamatti. "Though this being the case that it is, and a Coscarelli movie, he does get pulled into the action to some degree, which I loved. I loved doing that like at the end, that classic movie trope. He's a football, a kind of small-time but self-important wannabe. Rolling Stone type, he thinks he's cool, he's got a whole over-the-hill sense of himself, a whole sense of his kind of medical journalistic past, which I found funny. He's a great character who also happens to be there as a strong structural device, or vice versa. I do really like the idea that the monsters overtake even the framing device."

Though the star is best known for roles in award-winning dramas such as *American Splendor*, *Sideways*, *Coscarelli* (for which he got his Oscar nomination) and *Grease*'s *Melvin*, he's also been involved with some unusual genre projects, including *M. Night Shyamalan's Lady in the Water*, the pilot for the expanded *Twilight* of Mike Mignola's *The Amazing Screw-On Head* and another network gig in Rob Zombie's *The Hallowed World of El Superbeats*, so *John Doe at the End* is a no-brainer for someone who likes to dip his mind into weird waters.

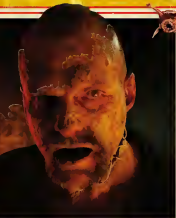
In fact, if you ask Giamatti whether or not he'd give *Soy Sauce* a go, the answer isn't surprising.

"I would absolutely try it. Why not? So it might permanently alter the space-time continuum, big deal. I'd have to have a shot of it. Good thing."



# THE EFFECTS WERE LIKE A BIG CLOUD HANGING OVER ME. I SAID, 'I'M GOING TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO DO THIS STUFF.'"

—WILLIAM MALLONE, CO-CREATOR OF THE TV SERIES



There's a man made of cockroaches in the back, who didn't make it into the film.

Yeah, that would have had to be a totally animated thing that might have taken weeks, maybe months of 3-D art. Anything like that just wasn't possible to put into the screenplay.

As far as things like that went, were there any that were really serious heart-breakers for you?

Yeah, there was one sequence that we got halfway done, and it was really looking cool, but to complete it was just going to take too long. Plus, I was always dealing with length issues. There was a very cool scene where our junior gangster, Justin White, kidnaps our heroes and lets them in the van. And when he arrives at the Mall of the Dead, our heroes are ready to confront him with Molotov cocktails and burn his ass, as it says in the script. And the door opens and he's standing there, except his eyeballs are on sticks about three inches out from his head like in a Tex Avery cartoon. We started down that path, and it looked pretty good but we had a lot of other major effects and just couldn't allocate the money and the time.

You've spoken of taking a gamble on these two unknown actors as leads and it appears to have paid off. How did you connect with them — just the standard audition process?

Yes, it was. The director is the first audience, and believe me, there are days and weeks of tedium when you're watching people come in and butcher your script. Actors of all different stripes who can't do anything with your material. And you're going, "This script is terrible! This is gonna make for a lousy movie!"

Then one day somebody walks in and starts doing a scene and it's "Oh! This could really be good!" [Laughs] And those were the moments I had with Chase and Rob. With Chase, he came in and as part of the audition I had given him this page of narration because his character Dave essentially narrates the movie. And I thought, "I'm actually enjoying this. Read that again!" It was so freakin' good! It's an amazing mystery when you're making these movies and suddenly there's a moment of clarity when an actor will say a line right or you'll see an effect that's working or some little bit of violence that really works and it suddenly legitimizes the whole process. And that's what happened with Rob and Chase.



Your first hit in *From Dusk* examines a syringe full of *Big Jesus*.

figure out a way to do this stuff," and I did have some vague inclinations, but it took a lot of effort and some kind assistance from certain people, [namely] my friend William Malone, who made the *House on Haunted Hill* remake, and the *Masters of Horror* episode "The Four-Haired Child."

That was one of my favorites in that series!

Oh, yeah, that was great! He started as a makeup effects guy back in the day. And Bill was kind enough to go through my script with me while I was doing the adaptation. So I'd take him out for Mexican lunch and say, "Okay, I've gotta do this most monster. How do I do this most monster? A man in a suit? A digital construct? How would you do this?" So I would run these scenarios with him and a couple of other friends of mine who have done digital effects. Kerry Prior, who did the sphere effects on the later *Phantasm* films and recently directed a film called *The Awakening*, was very helpful in talking me through the process, and what I might or might not be able to do. And there were a couple of other folks like that, so I pretty much got a game plan, but I still never knew whether it would work in the end. It's funny how certain effects that at first just seemed asinine, so impossible to do, were actually pretty simple and came out just great. And then there were also some very difficult scenes that we just struggled and struggled with.



**How much — if at all — was David Wong involved in the adaptation process?**

He wasn't. But that's not meant in a backhanded way, because as we made the deal and it was being concluded, I asked him — if it were up to him — how he would adapt this garbanutis story into a movie. And he wrote me a one-paragraph description of his thoughts on how that would go down, and it was practically identical to my plans. "Take the first chunk of the book and try to keep it into the ending."

**Have you any interest in adapting the sequel, *This Book Is Full of Spiders* (Simenon, Snake, Don't Touch)?**

Under the right circumstances? Oh, yeah! There could I not? First, I'd love to work with Rob and Chase again, and I'd love to work with Paul again. At one point I said to him, "I don't know if that would work out so well, because your character has been killed off." And

he said, "Why would that matter?" [Laughs] Until that time, no one can say whether it's going to happen, but certainly all the material is there: We've got five amazing lead characters, fantastic peripheral characters — Clancy Brown's Dr. Mancos character, you could do a whole movie with him — so there's a lot of potential.

**Tell me a bit about your history with Paul Giamatti.**

It's all Oh Paul's fault! I was working on that *Atanarjuat* of Honor TV show in Canada and I got the email from him. He was over in Eastern Europe working on *Hotel* if he'd gone out for a meal with Paul, who was over there filming something else. And he said that all through lunch, as Paul wanted to talk about was *Autobots* *Ho-Do!* If you've ever met Ed, you know he's just an amazing, energetic spokesperson for the genre, but he's never been accused of being too restrained. [Laughs] I thought, Oh well, you know, he's

probably over-enthralling a bit. But then a couple of months later I was looking for rough one of the trade papers and there was an interview with Paul and they asked which director he'd like to work with, and he said, "Ben Cassarini — I love *Autobots* *Ho-Do!*" I was actually stunned to see that in print. So I contacted him and we had coffee and he said, "I've been planning that *Autobots* sequel and a key role — besides Elvis, of course — was his film's manager, Colonel Tom Parker, who had such a Svingalot-like control over him. So I pitched him the idea of being in this movie opposite Bruce Campbell, and he said, 'I'm in!'" Then I found out that Paul had a little production company and he'd been making some interesting movies — he did that *Gold Sula* film and *Lucky Dip* — and he had his partner Dan Terry volunteered to help produce the *Autobots* *Ho-Do!* sequel, but unfortu-



with Fennel Press. [There is later a reference in hardcover in 2008 by them to Ocean Books.]

"The most of the story didn't change, but the book did," says Wong of his customers. "There are a lot of being water reasons for this — writing for the internet is less difficult than writing for print; I could chide back and add some background, for understanding to flesh out parts I know were coming later, which couldn't be done when it was a serial — and also I think I just got better at writing between the lines it would be online and when it started getting pressed into wood pulp."

But John Dies still had one more leap to make from book to film. Wong, who loved Dan Cassarini's adaptation, knew exactly what his role should be during the process.

"I was very protective about the film and making sure that it was something that all of us could be proud of. And by far the most important part of that job was making sure I was not allowed within a thousand miles of the production. I seriously know absolutely nothing about making movies. If they had put me in charge, it would have been the worst movie ever made."

**JOHN DIES AT THE END** AUTHOR **DAVID WONG** EXPLAINS HOW HIS 'IMPOSSIBLE' STORY MADE IT FROM ONLINE TO IN THEATRES

# DESIGNER DRUG

by **ANDREW S. HENDERSON**

**J**OHNSON DIES AT THE END IS A TRIP, IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD. So too, it turns out, is the tale of how the book became a book. The novel began its life back in 2001 as an online serial, something popular now, but unheard of then. Author David Wong (pseudonym for Jason Pugh), now senior editor of *Cracked.com*, posted new installments every Halloween, each roughly the length of a short story.

"I was kind of afraid to send it to a publisher they'd read it back online, well, along with a photo of an internet dating ad," says Wong of his decision to release the book free on the web. "I had never written anything for publication in my life, so I was a stupid as just trying to undertake a few friends by writing silly things to my friends. I'd read a lot of fiction, I was already trying to write the most unbelievable thing I could think of."

Sure enough, *John Dies at the End* pretty quickly gained a following. The better comedy is split into two "books" and a lengthy epilogue so I read it more like a series of related novellas about our pair of unlikely heroes, Dave and John, and the brewing inter-dimensional war they've been unwittingly pulled into after sampling the alien, mind-expanding substance they call Ray Specs. It was part mainly screwball comedy, one part monster-fighter yarn, and one part gloriously apocalyptic, almost *B-movie*, when John calls John Dies "bitchiest story," it's not an exaggeration. Over the course of the sprawling 384-page novel, Dave and John have a showdown with a man-eating man, witness a war made from ancient severed heads, abuse thousands of apocalyptic who have taken the form of a virus in order to steal Dave's car, attempt to mindlessly destroy of highly infectious alien insects and come face to face with more than one

inter-dimensional portal — with the whole thing released in the first-person view Dave's perspective slacker slung.

"[John Dies] was basically a Halloween prank on the readers," explains Wong of the story he rolled out over the course of five years. "The idea was that it started out as a traditional chapter, good story — about the time and my friend went to a haunted house — but the plot just got steadily more and more insane, eventually leading the reader to see how long they could stick with it before it just got too stupid for them."

Of course, the experience of serializing a novel online was very different back then, before there were websites solely devoted to sharing and promoting such works. But Wong is quick to note that along with the internet challenges also came some freedoms.

"The first chapters went up before most media existed, before the word 'blog' had been invented, and before anyone or Earth had ever gotten a book deal from writing on the internet, as far as I know," he says. "So there wasn't a system or community or business model in place, but that also was very liberating... I wasn't falling to live up to anyone's expectations because my website, and the internet in general, hadn't existed long enough for people to learn my way."

Wong went on to edit and host his manuscript and, in 2007, John Dies at the End landed him a book deal



*Seaweed: Angus Scrimm as a friend (right), partner of the Most Menace, and (below) Detective Margot Fennell (John Goodman)*



notely we couldn't pull it together. And then that [previously mentioned] email from Amazon came along, and that's how it played out.

**Naturally, we can't leave Angus Scrimm out of this. I've heard tell over the years that Angus has an aversion to using any profanity onscreen, and yet it would appear he was able to pull that aside for *John Doe*. Did that take much convincing?**

Jim: I don't think it did, really. But Angus likes to play his cards close to the vest and when I approached him about this, before I even gave him the material, I warned him that there was a key expense that his character — a priest — had to say, and it was non-negotiable. But I told him it was an excellent part that he could really have some fun with, and it wasn't an awkward task, so he was expending less energy

principle on it. Of course, Karlson is a director in his own right, so when he does these designs he does it with a director's sensibility. He shoots videos of these effects and sends them to you, and in some cases I just recreated his videos on set.

**So you've been vegetarian for about — well, how long has it been?**

Matt: About seven years.

**So was the most monster particularly fearsome for you on a more personal level?**

Yeah, so there's some subtle commentary in that respect, and I really like how the distributors came up with that tagline in the trailer: "Just stay away from red meat." [Laughs]

***John Doe* is shock full of other monsters, as well. Do you consider it a monster movie?**

Jim: ... sure! That was what I loved about the book. There are pages when it's hide-under-the-bed scary and pages when it's laugh-out-loud funny. In England, everyone — everyone — describes it as "a bit of a scary."

**Actually, that's not just a UK thing. That's the exact term I've heard used to describe it most often here as well.**

What? How funny! It's just got everything in it, really. My favorite review so far was from Owen Gleiberman in *Rolling Stone*. He said it was a movie you would judge your friends by. [Laughs] High praise in my world!

***John Doe* shares certain basic themes with *Pleasantville*, especially in terms of**

**characters with conflicting notions of reality. Would you say the two films like these were easier to get financed in the 1970s or today?**

Oh, I don't know. I think it's harder to make independent movies generally now. Funding is drying up because of the demise of the DVD business. Many of us in this business didn't realize how good we had it when these poor saps out there were willing to pay \$20 for a DVD every week. [Laughs] There was a lot of money in it. With downloading, streaming and book-logging, that's come to an end, so less money is coming in and unfortunately a lot of distributors have folded. But it's also a time rife with possibilities, and I'm really enjoying our distributor, Magnolia, and its affiliate Magnet, because they're really using these two words.

**Drugs loom large in the plot of *John Doe*, and yet it never comes off as being a particularly pro- or anti-drug movie, maybe because *Soy Sauce* is fictitious and free from the stigma a real drug would carry. What are your own feelings about drugs?**

[Laughs] You mean currently? I'm not partaking right now. *Soy Sauce* is a drug that chooses you — you don't choose it. Of course, I'm sure there are plenty of junkies who say, "Heroin chose me! I had nothing to do with it!" But I think what *John Doe* reflects is exploration, & like Alice in Wonderland, find your head, as Grace Black said. The idea of an outside influence that opens up other worlds really attracted me to the story. For me, it's always been inextricably with what lies beyond. I started with horror movies and strange, psychedelic horror television as a kid — *Tai-Ant Zone*, *The Outer Limits*, all of that stuff. I was looking back to Alice, looking beyond the looking glass.

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CRIMES INSPIRED BOTH LEATHERFACE  
AND THE MODERN HORROR FILM ITSELF

# GEIN

BY DEREK NIETO

**N**O OTHER REAL-LIFE KILLER HAS HELPED SHAPE THE MODERN HORROR FILM AS MUCH AS ED GEIN, WHICH IS QUITE THE GORE CONSIDERING HE ONLY HAD TWO CONFIRMED VICTIMS TO HIS NAME.

Not that it was what he did to, and with, the bodies once they were dead that has captured our morbid imaginations. Modern horror movie staples such as homicidal mommy issues, confused sexual identity, grave-robbing for souvenirs, believing people like animals, wearing human skin and even themes of cannibalism and necrophilia (incredibly yet erroneously linked to Gein) all began with the Plainfield, Wisconsin farmer.

Born toward Theodore Gein, on August 27, 1906, he was the second son of Augusta and George Gein. Despite the fact that Augusta apparently hated her husband, the couple stayed together for religious reasons and she moved the family to a farm on the outskirts of Plainfield, where she could segregate her children from the outside world. A devout Lutheran, she preached the Old Testament to Ed and his older brother Henry, one told them that all women, aside from her, were evil. It's no surprise that they were socially awkward, but Ed was also shy and rather effeminate, making him a target for bullies. Making matters worse, his mother forbade him to have friends. Despite this parenting, the boys would find work as landrymen, and Ed would make additional money as a babysitter.

After George died of a heart attack in 1940, Henry began to rebel against his mother. In 1944, he was found dead in the woods on the Gein property, of apparent asphyxiation. Ed was a suspect but was never charged in the case. Augusta died the next year following a series of strokes, leaving Ed alone in the house. Devastated, he boarded up several of the upstairs rooms, including his mother's bedroom, and lived in a small room attached to the kitchen. Gein had been isolated, abused, emasculated and demeaned by his mother, yet with her passing, he lost the person who was, in his microcosm of a world, his best friend and only love, which pushed him over the edge.

The depths of his insanity would become known to the world after he was arrested in 1957, following the November 17 disappearance of local housewife store owner Brenda Barlow. Police, suspecting Gein after discovering that the last receipt the woman had made out was to him (for antiseptic), searched his home and found her decapitated body in a shed, strung up upside down and gutted. She'd been killed with a .22-caliber rifle and then dressed like a doll. A search of Gein's house revealed, among other horrors, chairs upholstered in human skin, bowls made from the tops of skulls, masks of human faces stuffed with paper and mounted on his wall, supplies strung together for a belt, a shade pull made from a pair of women's lips, skulls mounted on his bedposts and a shoebox containing nine vulvae. Most of the items were the result of years of grave-robbing, but they also forced the head of Mary Hagen, a bar owner who had gone missing three years earlier. Gein also admitted that upon his mother's death, he had decided that he wanted a sex change and had taken to wearing a suit made of tanned female skin.

He continued to kill Worden and Hagen's, however, he was found mentally unfit to stand trial for his crimes and institutionalized until 1968, when he was then deemed competent enough to stand trial. Gein was convicted of first-degree murder for the death of Worden and was given a life sentence that he served out in a mental institution. Gein's property and its belongings were scheduled to be auctioned off in 1965, but three days before that was to happen, the house burned to the ground, arson was suspected but never confirmed. Gein was never released from incarceration, and died of respiratory failure on July 26, 1984. He was 77 years old.

Labelled "The Mad Butcher" and "The Plainfield Ghoul," Gein's crimes would lead him to become, through various interpretations, cinema's first "real" monster — more relevant and terrifying than any goblin, abom or otherwise supernatural threats that preceded him. The Gein-ification of horror began in 1960 with Alfred Hitchcock's hugely popular masterpiece *Psycho* (based on Robert Bloch's 1959 novel) and has continued through the rough, grand-house bleakness of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), the *Gear-*inspired *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) and more, including this month's *Texas Chainsaw 3D*.

Now *Morgue* takes a look at the films either directly influenced by or based upon, horror cinema's most ferociously inspirational human monster, to reveal the many movie faces of Ed Gein.

WTF UPS BY DEREK NIETO AND THE GORE-MET



**PSYCHO — PSYCHO IV**  
(1980 — 1986)  
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, Richard Franklin, Anthony Perkins and Mick Garris

As the final cinematic exploration of Gein, by the Master of Suspense himself, *Psycho* set a high bar for the modern movie monster. Anthony Perkins as Norman Bates is absolutely amazing and deli-

ving in his performance as a shy naive boy with an affinity for badmeny and having his dead mother as a roommate. The film tries away from presenting Gein's really gruesome tendencies, though, instead focusing on the character's anxiety stemming from his mommy issues.

At the time it was an eye-wide-what acknowledgment of gender issues with a "psycho" who's more than just a fiend but someone very real. His subtle tells make Norman as believable. When Marion (Janet Leigh) finally suggests, over sandwiches, that the crazy issue behind his

makeup as he may be his mother, we see a small crack in his affable veneer.

Norman continued to grapple with his demons throughout these madness and murder-filled sequels he would be released from incarceration, only to kill again), a failed TV pilot and a short-for-short remake in 1986 — all of which present a very sympathetic character. A new TV series premiering in A&E this year, called *Bates Motel*, will delve into Norman's formative years as a boy and teenager. The fascination with that Gein archetype continues. **DING**



### THREE ON A MEATHOOK (1972)

Directed by William Girdler

Little exploration about William Girdler (Druury, Day of the Animals) plundered the Ed Gein mythos for his second film, which tinkles with that title. In it, Billy Townsend (James Farenti) lives as a farm with his widower father (Charles Hallahan) and has no memory of murdering the young women his Pa keeps finding around the place. But Billy sure enjoys the special meal that his old man butchers in his locked shed!

Girdler switched genders for the domineering parent and roles for the killer, but kept the cannibalism. Gein was (only) rumored to have indulged in, and really based in on the idea of hanging people as methosols, which would become such an iconic image in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* a year later. Unfortunately, the title is the best part of this infernally dull film. **C- (B)**



### DERANGED: CONFESSIONS OF A NECROPHILE (1974)

Directed by Jeff Giller and Alan Gensley

Released the same year as the original *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, this *Deranged* took a more faithful to Gein's persona, life and

crimes than *Hooper's* movie (despite an annoying recurring reporter character who appears to address the audience). Gently character actor Roberts Blossaum plays Gein stand-in Ezra Cobb, soft-spoken, nervous and femininely creepy, he's haunted by his dead, domineering mother, when he digs up, moves back into the house and tends to As Gein did, Ezra rots enough power to decorate his place with trinkets crafted from body parts (see particularly disturbing scene, which was cut from the theatrical release but can be seen in some releases, shows Ezra graphically scooping the brains and eyes out of a victim's head), and he's taken a fancy to wearing human skin. As his ghoulish impulses escalate, we're treated to a very TCM-like stalking scene in the house with a Mary Hagan stand-in, which leads to Ezra's last ill: a hardware store employee meant to be the younger version of Gein's last victim, hardware store owner Bernice Wondert.

*Deranged* definitely doesn't shock for a true representation of Ed Gein — despite the film's title, our amateur transcendist was not a necrophile — but this greasy, ghoulishness pleaser has a lot going for it: graphic effects by Tom Savini, *Black Christmas* director Bob Clark as an producer (credited as Tom Kent), a script by Alan Gensley of *Death Dream House*, and a very well-cost film. **C- (B)**



New Mexico's *Deranged* (left) is a Warner Bros. production (right) and *Hooper's* *Massacre* (right) is a Warner Bros. production. *Deranged* is a Warner Bros. production. *Massacre* is a Warner Bros. production.



### THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (1974 - 2013)

Directed by Tobe Hooper, Jeff Burr, Ken Kesey, Marston Hooper, Jonathan Liebesman and John Lessenhop

When Kim Henkel and Tobe Hooper scripted *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), they took the most gruesome elements of Gein's crimes — gawking, corpses as decoration, skin masks, suspected cannibalism — and spread them across the twisted family's three brothers: The Cook (Jim Siedow) is amiable yet creepy and may be selling human meat as BBQ. The Hitchhiker (Ed Neill) is a creep, wears a bag fastened to a cat head, and is obsessed with death. Leatherface is an unforgettable introvert who wears masks made of human skin and kills out of fear.

*Hooper* made *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* a (1980) decidedly more comic. He gives the family a surname, Sawyers, made the Cook, now named Drayton, an award-winning chef, let Leatherface explore his sexuality and introduced new brother, Chop Top (Bill Mosely), as the twin of the Hitchhiker (now a mummified corpse). Gein's macabre decorating sense is taken to brooding-

region proportions in the clan's abandoned amusement park bar.

New Line Cinema attempted to franchise TCM with *Leatherface: The Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part II* (1986). *Leatherface*, the only carry over from Hooper's films, now lives with a new family of cannibals. Director Jeff Burr delivered a full-on splatter film that was heavily cut for an R rating, and even banned in some markets. A red to Gein's a victim strapped up in the kitchen like a deer.

Hinkel essentially remade TCM as *The Return of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1989), but threw in a government conspiracy and turned Leatherface into a cross-dresser. The cost features an early-career Matthew McConaughey and Renée Zellweger and a liplock-sipping Leatherface whom Tandy compared to *The Silence of the Lambs*. Buffalo Bill — more in line with Gein psychologically but the film itself is nevertheless awful.

Another remake arrived in 2003, featuring Leatherface as the central villain. Here he's actually disfigured born with his mask — thereby making him more boogerman than tortured soul with an identity crisis. This was even more so the case with *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning* (2006), as he's now a deformed and horribly abused bastard child of a slaughterhouse worker (kill in a slaughterhouse dumpster to die as a baby) who lives in yet another cannibalistic clan. This is over-the-top Hollywood monster making. **C- (B)**



# HELL-BENT FOR

# LEATHERFACE

THE MOST FAMOUS MOVIE MANIAC INSPIRED BY ED GEIN RETURNS IN  
**TEXAS CHAINSAW 3D**

BY THE GORE-MET

**I**N 1974 DIRECTOR Tobe Hooper terrorized filmmakers with a new breed of villain: the demented, cannibalistic enigma with a predilection for wearing the skinned faces of women, known as **LEATHERFACE**.

Hooper and writer Kim Henkel loosely based the character on Ed Gein, one of the most infamous murderers in the annals of American crime. They chose to focus on the inside aspects of Gein's crimes, as borne out in the film's act despite the furniture made from human parts, the skulls used as decoration and the masses Leatherface wears his face in fact. (Interestingly, the cannibals in their film is only implied, just as it was in the Gein case; Gein never admitted that he consumed human flesh, even though the heart of his last victim, Bernice Worden, was allegedly found in a pot on his stove.)

Over the course of six sequels and remakes, the character has drifted from a force of nature that was, as original Leatherface Benito Hernandez once noted in an interview, "not discernible by the audience," to a perverse clown in Hooper's direct sequel, *The Return of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre* 2 (1996), a time-vault to the Return of the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1984), and a horribly abused child in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning* (2006). Gen Yager, the latest actor to don the dead skin mask, for *Texas Chainsaw 3D* (out January 4 from Lionsgate) is taking the character back to his roots and may just be the best (and to pull Leatherface out of the creative doldrums).

"In the early '80s, they re-released the original movie. I'd heard of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* but never seen it. My family and I were living in Las Vegas and me and the boys went to see it at the local drive-in," recalls Yager of his first encounter with the character. "It was just the greatest movie. I loved it. Shortly after that, when my parents got our first VCR, I bought two tapes, *Friday* and *Return of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. I wore them out."

That early fascination with horror became his life's pursuit. Yager is a visual artist who runs clothing company Red Angel Designs. His work is inspired by everything dark, from Edgar Allan Poe to Nietzsche to serial killers. A natural resonance into film included acting classes—and a date with destiny.

"I met producer Glen Mazzara a couple of years ago. We were helping a mutual friend shoot a pilot for a TV show he was pitching. We started hanging out together because we like doing a lot of the same things. It was about a year later that another mutual friend, Jeff Colantoni—I was taking Jeff's acting class at the time—suggested to Glen over eggs that I'd be a good Leatherface. I don't think it was until I met the director at Glen's Christmas party that they were convinced. Actually, it may have been a few weeks later, when they came to see me at 'Edbert,' the 'Dribble Ogle' in the British pantomime *Phantom of the Mayflower Club* in North Hollywood. I scared the hell out of people, despite it being a farcical comedy."

Making the leap to Leatherface was something Yager calls "horrific and absolutely insane." First, he met with artist Anne Sims, who designed the iconic headgear for the new film, as they could make a coat of his head to sculpt the mask as. But the full impact of being Leatherface didn't strike the actor until his first day of shooting.

"I still remember when they suited me up," says Yager. "It was for the scene you see in the trailer with Alexander [Bedding] first falling down the steps and I'm right behind her. I still remember standing in that house and when they said, 'Alright, man, start the chainsaw.' It was just the most awesome feeling you could ever have. There were some opportunities to bring something to the character as an actor, but it's a lot of it is automatic. You pick up a chainsaw, you put on that mask, and people are automatically afraid of you. Everybody tried to be cool, but I could scream anybody as that cool. It's an interesting dynamic. There's something about Leatherface."

His goal was to make the audience believe that what they were seeing,





**Tool of the Trade** Lortz, like actor John Cusack, can't remember much about it

even given the time gaps between the events in the original film and this one, was the same person who hung Pink on a meat hook and hit Sally just over 30 years ago. To do less, he eventually studied the original Leatherface.

"One of the most painful moments in making this movie was when I got to walk through the original Texas Chainsaw house with Gunnar Hansen, it was dictated out for the movie. That's a surreal experience in itself, to walk through that house. Then to do it with Gunnar Hansen and talk about shooting the movie, what it was like back then, and the atrocities and carnalities he saw. He had some definite advice about running this. I told him, 'I did my absolute best to rip you off.' There's a line people there's mine to deal with, but I wanted to do what he did. He had all sorts of little subtleties that he's written about and talked about, where he feared that character and what he did with it. I've tried to replicate that the best I could, and apply the new circumstances."

When Hansen was preparing for the role, he spent time at a camp for developmentally challenged children, learning to mimic their mannerisms as well as he was able to pass as a resident. That informed his brilliant portrayal of Leatherface as both frightened and childlike.

"There's a lot of details about Leatherface's mental capacity," says Yeager. "He's not just mentally retarded; he's a person, that's the most fascinating part of his character. And it's the most horrifying thing when you think about it, he's like the unbearable. I used to sit on the back of him as the character if he'd be about three hours. It might have been able to go longer, but it was time to go to bed and I just couldn't tell sales as Leatherface it's too horrifying, and unnecessary to make a movie, I found."

As mantras as Leatherface is, Yeager doesn't see him as a boogymon or a character that requires a back story.

"I think of a person. I've never really worked out the fine details of his back story, how he really came to be or what his whole family dynamic was. I just don't have a firm grasp on that. He has his point of

view and his aspects to the world in a way that makes perfect sense to him. There's absolutely nothing supernatural about Leatherface, which is the scariest thing I love about the character. This guy, he's a dude, and he just does what he does if you're in a room full of people, and one of them is Leatherface, you want to be Leatherface. It's too dangerous to be anybody else. He's lethal. He loves only his family; everybody else is a threat or food."

As in the original film, this Leatherface wears different masks to suit the occasion. Yeager expands on the reasoning behind that.

"One of the things we found is that the masks mean something. It's how he expresses himself to others. He's very much aware of the person he's trying to put out, he's particular about what he wears. In the original you would see that, when he was making dinner he wasn't dressed like he would be when he was just walking around the house and the kids happened to pop in. I think that's what led subsequent movies down the path that he had to dress as a woman."

These movies were designated for the new 3-D viewers, and Yeager is confident that it is as valid as the original.

"The Texas Chainsaw massacre changed cinema. They were breaking some ground. That's one of the things I'm most proud of with the movie we made. I think we broke some more cinematic ground by shooting this 3-D. People tend to go, 'push 3-D as a gimmick.' I think you're going to see that there's a

new cinematic vocabulary available now, if that's the way you choose to tell a story. 3-D is the next step, like colour was, or adding sound, and it changes the way you think a movie."

This is the first film for Yeager, as *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was for Hansen. Producer Carl Mazzofero has an option to make two films, and Yeager confirms that, "It does good box office, we're going to make some more." At the suggestion that perhaps he'll be tapped for a remake of *Halloween Chainsaw Massacre* (1988), Gunnar Hansen's most "big" role, the 6-foot actor laughs, "Hey, you never know." 🍷



## MANIAC (1980)

Directed by William Lustig  
Moving the Gelm-style butchery from the boozies to the big city, *Maniac* is a product of both the sleazy New York grindhouse scene of the '80s, and the then-changing landscape of the US horror film in general,

when gore was as expected as scenes. The late Joe Spinell stars as Frank Zito, a middle-aged NYC apartment dweller — traumatized by early childhood abuse at the hands of his prostitute mother — who kills women and collects their scalps to pin on mannequins as trophies. (Tom Savini provides gruesome gore effects.) Trying to soothe his mother's grief and a Jersey mania, he even takes the dummies to bed to chat. The object of his affections, a photographer named Anna (Caroline Island), may be able to curb his compulsions... or not.

The film, which has been retitled with Eligh Wood as the lead to be released later this year, demonstrates how the Gelm character became an archetype, easily remapped for not just different times but different places. **DINE**



## THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS (1991)

Directed by Jonathan Demme  
Taken from a well-researched best-selling novel by Thomas Harris, this pseudo-Gelm antiport is

one James Gumb (Ted Levine, pictured), an amalgamation of Gelm's psychotic intellect and compulsion to harvest women's skin to make clothing (stemming from a desire to change gender, due to a deep self-hatred), and lead Bundy's media openness (beginning inquiry to lure women into his grasp). As evasive FBI agent Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) breaks him down with the help of incarcerated cannibalistic serial killer Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), Gumb is starving his latest victim in a pit in his basement in order to loosen her skin — Ed never had such foresight.

Here we see the body and gender issues at the forefront, all taken one step further than when we last saw them brushed with as much style and substance in *Psycho*. Director Jonathan Demme was as successful with his serial killer story that it swept all the major Academy Award categories that year. **DINE**





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20

HORROR

CONVENTION

SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 1 - 3

**DAYS OF THE DEAD**  
Atlanta, Georgia  
daysofthedead.net

MARCH 7 - 10

**TRANSWORLD'S  
HALLOWEEN  
& ATTRACTIONS SHOW**  
(Widespread: convention,  
not open to general public)  
St. Louis, Missouri  
hallowshow.com

MARCH 8 - 10

**MONSTER MANIA CON**  
Cherry Hill, New Jersey  
monstermania.net

MARCH 8 - 10

**DEAD WINTER  
HORROR CONVENTION**  
Somerset, Kentucky  
deadwintercon.com

MARCH 9 - 10

**TORONTO COMICON**  
Toronto, Ontario  
comicontoronto.com

MARCH 15 - 17

**HORROR REALM  
CONVENTION**  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
horrorrealmcon.com

MARCH 22 - 24

**BORRORHOLM  
WEEKEND**  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
borrortholmweekend.com

MARCH 22 - 24

**MAD MONSTER PARTY**  
Charlotte, North Carolina  
themasadmonsterparty.com

APRIL 5 - 7

**CINEMA WASTELAND**  
Cleveland, Ohio  
cinemawasteland.com

APRIL 5 - 7

**DAYS OF THE DEAD**  
Los Angeles, California  
daysofthedead.net

APRIL 12 - 14

**MONSTERPALOOZA**  
Burbank, California  
monsterpalooza.com

APRIL 19 - 21

**STARLAND**  
Denver, Colorado  
starland.com

APRIL 20 - 21

**FAN EXPO VANCOUVER**  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
fanexpoconvention.com

APRIL 25 - 28

**HAUNTON**  
(Ticket show for featured attraction,  
and Halloween industry)  
Irving, Texas  
haunton.com

APRIL 26 - 28

**ERIE CON**  
Grand Island, New York  
eriecon.org

APRIL 26 - 28

**CALGARY COMIC &  
ENTERTAINMENT EXPO**  
Calgary, Alberta  
calgaryexpo.com

APRIL 26 - 28

**CHILLED THEATRE  
TOY, MODEL  
AND FILM EXPO**  
Parsippany, New Jersey  
chilledtheatre.com

APRIL 26 - 28

**MOTOR CITY NIGHTMARES**  
Novi, Michigan  
motorcitynightmares.com

MAY 3 - 5

**TEXAS FRIGHTMARE  
WEEKEND**  
(Sponsored by Rue Morgue)  
Dallas, Texas  
texasfrightmareweekend.com

MAY 17 - 19

**SCI-FI VALLEY CON**  
Altoona, Pennsylvania  
scifi-valleycon.com

MAY 24 - 26

**CRYPTICON**  
Seattle, Washington  
crypticonseattle.com

MAY 24 - 26

**SPOOKY EMPIRE'S  
MAYHEM**  
Orlando, Florida  
spookyempire.com

JUNE 13 - 16

**WORLD HORROR  
CONVENTION**  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
stokers2013.org

JUNE 21 - 23

**APOLLO CON**  
Houston, Texas  
apollocon.org

JULY 12 - 14

**BLOWFEST**  
Phoenixville, Pennsylvania  
theofficialtheatre.com/bloblast

JULY 12 - 14

**G-FEST**  
Rosemont, Illinois  
g-fest.com

JULY 18 - 21

**COMIC CON  
INTERNATIONAL**  
San Diego, California  
comic-con.org

JULY 19 - 21

**MONSTER BASH**  
Mars, Pennsylvania  
monsterbashnews.com/bash.html

JULY 6 - 28

**FANDOMFEST**  
Lawrenceville, Kentucky  
fandomfest.com

AUGUST 9 - 11

**FLASHBACK WEEKEND**  
Rosemont, Illinois  
flashbackweekend.com

AUGUST 14 - 16

**MONSTER MANIA CON**  
Cherry Hill, New Jersey  
monstermania.net

AUGUST 22 - 25

**FESTIVAL  
OF  
FEAR**  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
rue-morgue.com/events/  
festival-of-fear

AUGUST 30 – SEPTEMBER 2

**DRAGON\*CON**  
Atlanta, Georgia  
dragoncon.org

SEPTEMBER TBA

**HORRORROUND WEEKEND**  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
horroroundweekend.com

SEPTEMBER TBA

**SACRAMENTO HORROR  
AND SCI-FI CONVENTION**  
Sacramento, California  
sacsfcon.com

SEPTEMBER TBA

**SATURDAY NIGHTMARES**  
Jersey City, New Jersey  
saturdaynightmares.com

SEPTEMBER 13 – 15

**MONTREAL COMIC CON**  
Montreal, Quebec  
montrealcomiccon.com/en

SEPTEMBER 13 – 14

**SCAREFEST HORROR AND  
PARANORMAL CONVENTION**  
Lexington, Kentucky  
scarefestcon.com

SEPTEMBER 19 – 21

**KILLER CON**  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
killercon.com

SEPTEMBER 20 – 22

**HORROR REALM  
CONVENTION**  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
horrorrealmcon.com

SEPTEMBER 27 – 29

**MONSTER MAMA CON**  
Hunt Valley, Maryland  
monstermama.net

OCTOBER 10 – 13

**NEW YORK COMIC CON**  
New York City, New York  
newyorkcomiccon.com

OCTOBER 18 – 20

**ROCK AND SHOCK**  
Worcester, Massachusetts  
rockandshock.com

OCTOBER 18 – 20

**SPOOKY EMPIRE'S  
ULTIMATE HORROR  
WEEKEND**  
Orlando, Florida  
spookyempire.com

NOVEMBER TBA

**UK FESTIVAL OF  
ZOMBIE CULTURE**  
Leicester, England  
terror4fun.com

NOVEMBER 8 – 10

**WEEKEND OF HORRORS  
CONVENTION**  
Bielefeld, Germany  
weekendofhorrors.com



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# The 20 **FILM** 13 **REEL FEAR** FESTIVALS

FEBRUARY 22 – 24

**NEVERMORE HORROR  
AND GOTHIC  
FILM FESTIVAL**  
Durham, North Carolina  
festivals.carnivalcinema.org/  
nevermore

MARCH 1 – 10

**FANTASPORTO**  
Paris, Portugal  
fantasporto.com

APRIL 3 – 13

**BRUSSELS  
INTERNATIONAL  
FANTASTIC FILM FEST**  
Brussels, Belgium  
biff.org

APRIL 4 – 11

**INTERNATIONAL HORROR  
& SCI-FI FESTIVAL**  
Phoenix, Arizona  
horrorfest.com

APRIL 11 – 14

**NIGHT VISIONS  
FILM FESTIVAL**  
Helsinki, Finland  
nightvisions.info

APRIL 12 – 20

**A NIGHT OF HORROR  
INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL**  
Sydney, Australia  
anightofhorror.com

APRIL 25 – 28

**DEAD BY DAWN**  
Edinburgh, Scotland  
deadbydawn.co.uk

MAY 4

**SALT CITY HORROR FEST**  
Syracuse, New York  
saltcityhorror.com

JUNE TBA

**FANTASTIC FILMS  
WEEKEND**  
Bristol, England  
www.nationalcinemuseum.org  
uk/fantastic

JUNE TBA

**FEARS FOR QUEERS  
HORROR FILM FESTIVAL**  
Dallas, Texas  
dustloadbath.com

# The FILM FESTIVALS

**JUNE TBA**  
**VAMPIRE-CON**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Los Angeles, California  
vampire-con.com

**JULY TBA**  
**CRYPTSHOW**  
**FESTIVAL**  
Barcelona, Spain  
cryptshow.com

**JULY 5 - 13**  
**NEUCHÂTEL**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**FANTASIE FILM**  
**FESTIVAL**  
Neuchâtel, Switzerland  
miff.ch

**JULY 18 - AUGUST 6**  
**FANTASIA FILM FESTIVAL**  
Montreal, Quebec  
fantasiafest.com

**AUGUST 22 - 24**  
**FILM 4 FRIGHTFEST**  
London, England  
frightfest.co.uk

**SEPTEMBER 5 - 15**  
**MOONLIGHT MADNESS**  
(as part of the Toronto  
International Film Festival)  
Toronto, Ontario  
tiff.net

**SEPTEMBER 26 - 29**  
**ATLANTA HORROR**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Atlanta, Georgia  
atlantahorrorfilmfest.com

**OCTOBER TBA**  
**BRAM STOKER**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Whitby, England  
bramstokerfilmfestival.com

**OCTOBER TBA**  
**BUENOS AIRES**  
**ROJO SANGRE**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Buenos Aires, Argentina  
rojosangre.combuenosaires.com

**OCTOBER TBA**  
**DARK CARAVAN**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Bloomington, Indiana  
darkcaravanfilmfest.com

**OCTOBER TBA**  
**FREAKSHOW HORROR**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Orlando, Florida  
freakshowfilmfest.com

**OCTOBER TBA**  
**HOLLYWOOD HORROR,**  
**SCI-FI AND FANTASY**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Hollywood, California  
hollywoodworld.com/horrorfest/

**OCTOBER TBA**  
**SHOCKER FEST**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Riverbank, California  
shockerfest.net

**OCTOBER TBA**  
**TEXAS BLOOD BATH**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Dallas, Texas  
dobloodbath.com

**OCTOBER 8 - 6**  
**SUPERFEST**  
Los Angeles, California  
shredded.com

**OCTOBER 3 - 13**  
**STIGES FANTASTIC**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Stiges, Spain  
stigesfestival.com

**OCTOBER 4 - 6**  
**GRIMMFEST**  
**HORROR & SCI-FI**  
**FESTIVAL**  
Manchester, England  
grimmfest.com

**OCTOBER 4 - 6**  
**MILE HIGH HORROR**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Denver, Colorado  
milehighhorrorfestival.com

**OCTOBER 10 - 19**  
**SCREAMFEST HORROR**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Los Angeles, California  
screamfestla.com

**OCTOBER 10 - 19**  
**SPOOKY MOVIE**  
**INTERNATIONAL HORROR**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Washington, DC  
spookyfest.com

**OCTOBER 15 - 13**  
**SACRAMENTO HORROR**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Sacramento, California  
sacramentofilmfest.com

**OCTOBER 11 - 13**  
**TELLTALE HORROR SHOW**  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
tellytoldhorrorshow.com

**OCTOBER 17 - 20**  
**EDGE HORROR**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Erie, Pennsylvania  
ereshorrorfest.com

**OCTOBER 17 - 20**  
**FLICKERS: RHODE ISLAND**  
**INTERNATIONAL HORROR**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Providence, Rhode Island  
film-festival.org

**OCTOBER 17 - 25**  
**TORONTO AFTER DARK:**  
**HORROR, SCI-FI**  
**AND ACTION**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Toronto, Ontario  
torontoafterdark.org

**OCTOBER 24 - 26**  
**KNOXVILLE HORROR**  
**FILM FEST**  
Knoxville, Tennessee  
knoxvillehorrorfest.com

**OCTOBER 25 - NOVEMBER 1**  
**SALT HORROR**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Park City, Utah  
saltinternationalcinema/film  
festival.com

**OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 3**  
**NIGHT VISIONS**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Helsinki, Finland  
nightvisions.info

**OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 8**  
**SOUTH AFRICAN**  
**HORROR FILM FEST**  
Cape Town, South Africa  
horrorfest.info

**NOVEMBER TBA**  
**THE DRUNKEN ZOMBIE**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Peoria, Illinois  
drunkzombiefilmfestival.com

**NOVEMBER TBA**  
**MORRADO FILM FEST**  
Pachuca, Mexico  
morradofest.com

**NOVEMBER 8 - 9**  
**BURNED ALIVE**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
Atlanta, Georgia  
burnedalivefilmfest.com

# The YEAR 2012 R.I.P. REVIEW

**H**orror last year was, in a word: epic. The Cabin in the Woods delivered an insanely fun and intelligent monster-melodrama, *Father's Day* threw every transgression at the wall and we loved how it stuck (Half the Ruckus), and John Dies at the End proved that a low budget is no obstacle to everything-plus-the-kitchen-sink storytelling. Books, comics and video games followed suit, with the familiar reworked into something big in *The Walking Dead*, *Phantom*, *Vampire Slayer*, *Godzilla*, *Half Century War* and *Telltale's The Walking Dead*. And if you needed something more interactive, zombie runs got us running scared. And don't forget *Clive Barker's reimagined Nightbreed: The Cabal Cut*—a triumph of imagination that makes up for the onslaught of low-budget cash-grab possession movies. So... how ya gonna lap that, 2012?

## BEST FEATURE

*The Cabin in the Woods*  
Directed by Drew Goddard  
Lionsgate

## BEST FIRST FEATURE

*The Loved Ones*  
Directed by Sean Byrne  
Image Pictures

## BEST SHORT FILM

*Morgue Scream*  
Directed by Alberto Marvantes  
Cinecity Film

## BEST INDIE FEATURE

*Father's Day*  
Directed by Aaron-G  
Tyrone Team Video

## FESTIVAL FAVOURITE

*John Dies at the End*  
Directed by Don Coscarelli  
Magnolia Releasing

## MOST ORIGINAL CONCEPT

*Amidst*  
Directed by Brandon Cronenberg  
Alliance

## BEST DOCUMENTARY

*The American Scream*  
Directed by Michael Stephenson  
Brainstorm Media

## BEST FILM YOU DIDN'T SEE

*The Ray*  
Directed by Barry Levinson  
Lionsgate

## BEST NEW KILLER

*Chris Fuchman (Father's Day)*

## BEST MONSTER

*The Mer-man*  
(*The Cabin in the Woods*)

## GORIEST FILM

*Father's Day*  
Directed by Aaron-G

## GORIEST SCENE

*Brutal (two words, both under)*  
Directed by Michael Pelnick-Strauss  
Zedek International Films

## BEST BLU-RAY/DVD PACKAGING

*Dark Shadows: The Complete Original Series (Limited Ed.)*  
MPI Home Video

## MOST WELCOME SPECIAL EDITION

*Battle Royale: The Complete Collection Blu-ray*  
Anchor Bay

## BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

*[REC] 2*  
Magnolia Releasing

## WORST CINEMATIC ATROCITY

*The Devil Inside*  
Paramount Pictures

## BEST TELEVISION

*American Horror Story*  
FX

## BEST ALBUM

*Harley Poe*  
Salmon, Sex and No Regrets  
Chain Smoking Records

## BEST SCORE

*The Woman in Black*  
Marco Beltrami  
Sire Audio

## BEST MUSIC REISSUE

*Maque of the Red Death*  
David Lee  
Quarter Records

## BEST COMEBACK

*Nightbreed: The Cabal Cut*

## BEST POSTER

*V/H/S*  
- Gravitas Inc.

## BEST FICTION BOOK

*The Crowing*  
Lauri R. King  
Night Shade Books

## BEST NON-FICTION BOOK

*Jess: Memories from Martha's Vineyard*  
Mark Taylor  
Talon Books

## BEST ART BOOK

*Black Magic: The Art of Chaz Zar*  
Chaz Zar  
Ben/MVI Publishing

## BEST COMIC BOOK SERIES

*Saga*  
Brian K. Vaughan and Peen Stripes  
Image

## BEST GRAPHIC NOVEL

*Phocchia, Vampire Slayer Vol. 3: Of Wood and Blood*  
Van Jensen and Dustin Higgins  
SLG

## BEST COMIC BOOK/GRAPHIC NOVEL WRITER

*John Arcudi (The Group)*

## BEST COMIC BOOK/GRAPHIC NOVEL ARTIST

*James Stokoe*  
(*Godzilla: Half Century War*)

## BEST VIDEO GAME

*The Walking Dead*  
Telltale Games

## BEST NON-VIDEO GAME

*Dynasty Rising LARP*  
epicgaminglarp.com

## BEST TREND

*Zombie runs*

## WORST TREND

*Uninspired possession movies*

## BEST FEATURE AS VOTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE-MORTUARY.COM

*The Cabin in the Woods*

## MOST ANTICIPATED IN 2013

*Tie: Maniac and Pacific Rim*

## LEAST ANTICIPATED IN 2013

*Harrel and Goret - Witch Hunters*





# BLASPHEMER THAN NOIR

JUST IN TIME FOR THE RELEASE OF HIS LATEST CHARLIE PARKER NOVEL, **JOHN CONNOLLY** EXPLAINS WHY MYSTERY AND HORROR MAKE SUCH BRITALLY GOOD BEDFELLOWS.

**A** MAN STUMBLES HOME AFTER A NIGHT OF HARD DRINKING, ONLY TO FIND HIS WALLS AND FLOOR SLICK WITH BLOOD. HIS WIFE AND YOUNG DAUGHTER HAVE BEEN BUTCHERED; IN AN ACT OF HEINOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL TORTURE, THE KILLER WILL LATER HAVE THE LITTLE GIRL'S FACE DELIVERED TO HER GRIEVING FATHER WHO, BY THEN, IS OUT FOR BLOOD HIMSELF.

WELCOME TO THE BRUTAL WORLD OF JOHN CONNOLLY.

The Dubliner is best known for his Charlie Parker novels, about a Maine-based private detective who is haunted, figuratively and literally, by the restless ghosts of his murdered wife and child. The best-selling series, which began with the Bram Stoker Award-nominated *Every Dead Thing* in 1999, isn't Connolly's only foray into the realm of horror. Though, his collection of ghost stories, *Necromancies*, included "The New Daughter," which was adapted into the criminally underappreciated 2009 film of the same name (*RMP* 102), and his short fiction has been included in anthologies such as *Wanted: Dark Disturbances* (Bantam Press, 2006) and *The New Dead* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2010).

The eleventh Parker novel, *The Wrath of Angels*, finds the troubled detective searching for a strange artifact from a plane that crashed in the Maine woods years ago: a list of men and women who have literally made a deal with the Devil. Parker fears his own name might be on the list, but others are drawn to it as well, including a serial killer who harvests the souls of his victims.

With *The Wrath of Angels* out in North America on January 3, Connolly helps us navigate the no man's land that lies between mystery and horror.

**Horror fans are happy to embrace the conventions of crime and mystery fiction, but that dynamic often doesn't work both ways. Why is that?** Mystery is based on a certain scientism to retrospection [Readers] come at it with this belief that, by the application of logic and reason, the universe can be understood... Supernatural fiction is the opposite of that. Human beings—and the world—are a lot stranger than we sometimes realize. The mystery community tends to be slightly more conservative, whereas I think horror can be a little bit more embracing. It's a bit of a wicker church, I think.

**Your work is full of references to myth, folk tales and fairy tales. How did those things shape you as a writer?**

I've always had a fascination with European folk tales and their original, much darker versions. There are elements of that in the Parker books: they tend to use forests, they tend to use missing children, they tend to use a lot of [mythic and folkloric] motifs. I like the darkness of them. I never set down and thought,

I'm going to start weaving in folk tales and fairy tales. It's more because these motifs suit the mood of what I'm doing, and the atmosphere.

**You're most often classified as a mystery writer, but all of your short fiction deals with the supernatural.**

The short form is perfectly suited to the supernatural story. I actually think it's much harder to write supernatural novels than supernatural short stories, because a short story doesn't have to explain. It can just give you a glimpse and that's it—you're left with the end dangling like the tentacle of a jellyfish in the water. Whereas, if you read a horror novel and you've gone through hundreds of pages, quite often the mystery is much more interesting than the solution.

That's often the case with mystery fiction as well. Because of writers such as M.R. James, I've always loved short, supernatural fiction. I think it's very potent, and I like the fact that I don't need to explain—that those things just happen.

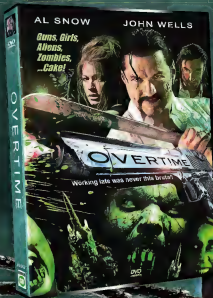


**Parker routinely takes on both human monsters and supernatural ones, usually in the same book. Why is that juxtaposition important?**

I think most people are not evil. Selfish or greedy, maybe, but they're not evil. Evil tends to be a consequence of their actions and intent. And so, quite often in the books, these people are presented

in opposition to this kind of deeper evil. Is there a deeper evil from which these things crawl? If there is a God, is there a not-God? The books provide an interesting playground for those ideas, so some of the villains tend to be more grotesque than others. But quite often it's basic human weakness that's much more interesting to explore. ☐

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# CINEMA

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## THE RAW AND THE OVERCOOKED

### DEAD SUSHI

Starring Eren Tokieda, Shigeru Matsuzaki and Kazuo Shimizu

Written by Noburo Iguchi, Masaki Iguchi and Ken Tange  
Directed by Noburo Iguchi  
Millennium Entertainment

Since this is a movie about killer sushi, you should already know whether or not you're going to like it on premise alone. But if you're still unsure if you want to check this out, allow me to set the table.

It begins more like a hard-boiled tale than a hilarious horror movie: Kaiko (Eren Tokieda) runs away from the borderline abusive tutelage of her sushi chef father and takes a server job at a secluded inn. On her first day, executives from a large drug company show up to stay for the night and pig out on sushi. Dinner is interrupted, however, when a disgruntled ex-pharmaceutical scientist arrives with a serum that brings dead cells back

to life. He expects said serum into the sushi served to the big pharma execs and, you guessed it, the sushi attack! Since the hotel is filled with hysterical idiots, Kaiko teams up with chef-cum-yamato sword (actor/singer) Matsuzaki Shigeru to rid the place of its feckly infestation, using their karate-like sushi prep skills

Most of the fun to be had in this cold-blooded gore-comedy is watching the sushi situation escalate to ludicrous heights and boy, oh boy, does it ever. The movie is packed to the gills with flying sushi, barbecuing sushi, roller-riding sushi, acidic sushi spray, sushi rombles, anthropomorphic fighting sushi, and much more. It's just the kind of insanity we've come to expect from writer/director Noburo Iguchi (*YakuzaKiss*, *Madnet Girls Squad*).

That means cheap gore effects, over-the-top arterial spray, crotch hits and fart jokes aplenty. There's also a large helping of vent-exorcised chop-sucky slapstick, thanks in no small part to new fighting favorite Tokieda, who possesses the comic prowess of Hong Kong legends such as Jackie Chan and Stephen Chow.

To sum it up: *Dead Sushi* does for Japanese cuisine what *Ghoulies* did for toilets. Convinced?

PATRICK DOLAN

## PRETTY DOPE

### RESOLUTION

Starring Peter Dinklage, Vicky Carron and Zelen McQueen  
Directed by Justin Swanson and Aaron Moorhead  
Written by Justin Swanson  
Telerec Film

There's a telling moment in the first five minutes of *Resolution*: Michael (Peter Dinklage) excitedly approaches his best friend Chris (Vicky Carron) as the latter, his brain clearly drug-fried, helplessly fires a gun from his front porch. Chris crouches as he walks, as if he's evaded any stray or not-so-stray bullets, but still

wants to appear amiable and casual, so for a few steps he awkwardly shambles forward in a hunched-over stance. As a film, *Resolution* pretty much forces us to do the same thing — it invites us to make ourselves at home once as it keeps us off balance through its air of gaudy menace. In fact, few films in recent memory have made unease as entertaining.

But does that make Justin Benson and Aaron Moorhead's fest favorite a horror film? Well, I've always used this as the litmus test: does the story feature a monster, and not just a villain?

Certainly there's no shortage of potential monsters in *Resolution*: Chris is battling the proverbial "inner demons" of substance abuse, which threaten to turn him violent without warning. Then there's the apparently well-intentioned Michael, who handouts his body to a pipe as part of a cold-bankery regimen. Neither is the monster? You're sure? All right, then how 'bout the creepy UFO outlaws who eventually show up, or the local gaspans? The ward recedes out in the dark?

By refusing to localize the monstrous in a single entity while gradually heightening the atmosphere of dread — our lenses discover cameras, recordings and photos apparently directed of them — Benson's script effectively projects a sense of lurking evil out into the universe itself. For pariahs, recall the feeling of omnipresent malevolence in Argentina's *Necronomicon* or Evil Dead's missile, *Lovecraftian* force but without the subjective shots to tie us off to its intentions.

Yell for all this, could *Resolution* simply be turned a "dark" indie fantasy or an arty all-thriller? I guess



as. But in the end, its focus on a mysterious, seemingly unstoppable source of terror makes me not only include it under the horror banner but also rank it as one of the genre's most accomplished and original releases in a while.

PETER OUTHOUSE

## SOW-SOW

### BITES OF SPRING

Starring Jessica Ramsey, AJ Bowen and Gentry Minketh  
Written and directed by Patrick Reynolds  
IFC Films

Writer/director Patrick Reynolds certainly can't be faulted for trying to cram as much as possible into the cinematic one-hour-and-fifteen-minute running time of his debut feature, *Bites of Spring*. It's just that it's all been done before, and more successfully.

The film starts off with the abduction of five friends, Alyssa (Jessica Ramsey) and Rachel (Jessica Ramsey), who are blowing off some steam at a bar after a bad day at work. The girls are taken to a farm where their kidnapper, a man known only as The Stranger (Marco St. John), stands to face by crudely taunting them with lines like "Are you clean?" and "I need to be sure." We soon learn that there is a creature on the guy's farm that needs the girls' blood in order to ensure a plentiful harvest. Or something like that.

The Stranger isn't the only kidnapper at work in *Bites of Spring*, though. A separate plotline follows a group of crooks (including indie horror debutant AJ Bowen) whose of the dead who plan to abduct the youngest daughter at a wealthy family goes awry. The two plotlines eventually converge in ways that won't come as much of a surprise to anyone, setting up the obligatory monster showdown. The creature is less than impressive: an anguished howling, brain-munching with the demeanor and gait of a schtick wrencher, and you're pretty much

there. As the hunters become the hunted slash-dodge ensue, we sink into an all-too-quickly lapsoidal staid-in-slash scenario that is neither exciting nor particularly rewarding.

*Bites of Spring* is well made for what it is and works as casual viewing for the seasoned horror fan, but don't expect anything new or surprising. As far as the blood harvest goes, the seeds just weren't ready to sow.

ORRIN METO

## ERRORIUM

### OSOMBIE

Starring Garry Shuey, Joe Manno and Jason Wade  
Directed by Jake Lyle  
Written by Brent Bone  
Entertainment One

This preachy, stumbling shocker is a good case-in-point for why expressing your political opinions



Rites of Spring

with ambiguous, Romano-style metaphors works far better than slung ping them into the viewer's head.

Posing fan of a former hot-button issue, the military-action-horror flick posits that Osama (bin Laden) isn't quite as dead as we've been led to believe. Instead, the terrorist is living it up as a zombie, thanks to an America-made biological weapon-gone-wrong. Now it's up to a yoga instructor (Joe Manno) and a ragtag team of special-op soldiers to eliminate the bin Laden zombie plague and save the people of Afghanistan.

Starting strong with a pair of action sequences loaded with gunfire, sword-fighting (one soldier has a katana) and hand-to-hand zombie axe-kicking, the

story grinds to a halt as it piles on boring, heavy-handed exposition that builds to the next action scene, then repeats this formula several times over. The cringe-inducing dialogue, made up of hacktastic one-liners and someone's idea of piffy rap lyrics, makes sure that every a plot point



is explained without a zinger to follow (including a joke stolen from MTV's *Huron Gore*—but honestly, not to mention here-faded political commentary gone discussion refers to former US president George Bush as "George Berserker") and stinked pop-culture references to everything from Facebook to *Beavis and Butt-Head*.

One of the biggest problems with this movie is that, despite its ludicrous premise and "clever" gags, it's not a comedy. *Osombie* takes itself too seriously in all the wrong places, giving the audience starm-fused explanations of the zombie infestation, basic back stories for all of the characters and overly dramatic death-scenes that have no place in an offensively low rental ramp.

If the sole purpose of *Osombie* was to drum up some brain-dead military mayhem to tide you over until the next *Call of Duty*, misman accented played. But if the filmmakers were aiming for laughs, their misanthropy needs work.

PATRICK DOLAN

## REICH IT OR NOT

### OUTPOST: BLACK SUN

Starring Richard Coyle, Gabe Russell and Catherine Steadman  
Directed by Steve Barker  
Written by Steve Barker and Ron Reynolds  
Magnet Media

Given some of the formulaic genre crap that gets pushed in our faces with guest PR belldaddies, it's astounding that curbside distributors get hold of well-made, original horror movies, only to dump them onto the market without so much as a press release. *Outpost* is a perfect example. The 2006 film showed up at the office one day with a generic cover, yet I turned out that the story at a military unit sent into an unstable part of Eastern Europe to retrieve something from a WWII-era bunker, only to come face-to-face with reanimated Nazi zombies, was a really well-made low-budget gem. Director/writer Steve Barker delivered what was essentially a Neil Marshall film with a touch of *Wolf*-boy's supernatural Nazi technology, but with a fraction of those film makers' coin. Yet, it was given almost zero promotion.

Unfortunately, the same goes for its sequel, *Outpost: Black Sun*, which also arrived at the office like an orphan on the doorstep. This time the story unfolds from the perspective of Nazi hunter Louis (Catherine Steadman), whose search for notorious war criminal Klausener leads her back to the titular outpost, which has birthed an army of undead, unstoppable Nazi ghosts that are cutting a path through the NATO forces sent to contain and cover up this rising fourth Reich. With the help of an engineer named Wallace (Richard Coyle) and the military unit they hook up with, Louis descends into the bowels of the bunker to unlock the mystery of the undead army and destroy the technology that created them.

Fine-tights, guns, hideous monsters and a WWII conspiracy make for an exciting story, and Barker is very assured in his direction and pacing. *Black Sun* feels a



## OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LANCE TASTES THE TEARS OF A CLOWN

### RED NOSES FOR BLUE LADIES

#### DEAD CLOWNS

Cryptkeeper Films

Clownophobia is defined as the fear of clowns, and it's a very real and quite prevalent phobia throughout the world. So there are probably a lot of you out there who'll agree that the best kind of clown is a dead clown. Fitting, as *Dead Clowns* happens to be the title of this flick about a seaside town in Florida being terrorized by a bunch of zombie clowns during a hurricane. Low on laughs, this is a dark film with some good gore, which features screen queens Brinke Stevens (*Demons*) and Debbie Rochon (*Black Magic*) doing their best not to be raped apart by these beral beas: it's kind of like *The Fly*, but with big red noses and floppy shoes.

BODY COUNT: 11

CLOWN COUNT: 14

### DIE LAUGHING

#### CLOWN HUNT

MVD Visual

This one's for those of you who'd rather kill clowns than run away from 'em. *Clown Hunt* follows a bunch of good ol' boys who travel to a secluded Texas ranch to drink a few beers and bag a few clowns. Sounds weird, but in this film it's completely legal to hunt clowns, but only during "Silly Season," and you can only kill the happy ones — no sad and sad clowns are still off limits. It may be low-budget, but the film works because of a tight script and terrific actors who play their parts with clownish seriousness, even when getting their prey or spying on clown mating rituals. A fun romp to be sure, and it finally answers the question of why we don't eat clown meat: because it tastes funny!

BODY COUNT: 29

CLOWN COUNT: 72

### MOCKERY OF JUSTICE

#### KILLJOY GOES TO HELL

Fall Moon Features

Twelve years and three sequels later, Fall Moon's clown prince, Killjoy, is back, but this time, instead of being summoned by some loser out for revenge, he's been called forth by the Devil himself to stand trial for not being evil enough. This is the second *Killjoy* sequel produced by Charles Band, and the legendary schlockmeister has helped give it a more professional look. The sets, costumes, lighting and dialogue are pro enough, even if the movie's subject is a little couple of decades trying to solve Killjoy's previous murders in a little padlock and bench. Representative of early Fall Moon films, *Killjoy Goes to Hell* is a good, goofy fun, and Canadian director John LaShoe (*Black Sheep*) is a guy to watch out for... in the good way.

BODY COUNT: 4

CLOWN COUNT: 16

let the madman Marshall join, especially in the action and dynamic between the tough guys. The major misstep is the casting of Steadman, who doesn't have the physical presence to sell her role as someone tough enough to enter a war zone by herself. Barker also fumbles with a Hollywood cliché: too much exposition, an unnecessary twist and some obligatory explosions.

*Black Sun* is a lesser sequel but still worth tracking down — and you'll certainly have to. Distributor Mongrel Media has an excellent reputation for its international dramas and seems highly interested in its horror acquisitions. So why do they better?

DAVE ALEXANDER

## HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS AND ALIENATE LEPERS

### MARK OF THE BEAST

Starring Debbie Rochon, Ellen Muth and Erik Egan

Directed by Jonathan Gorman and Thomas Edward Stewart

Written by Thomas Edward Stewart and Shari Lynn

Mixed Koth Pictures

*Mark of the Beast* can be viewed as either a) an exploration of the deleterious effect of blind group loyalty or b) a handy step-by-step guide to taking home the gold if the Olympic Committee ever sanctions an official Tard in the Pundoball competition.

Here is a brief outline for those playing the latter along at home: first get so hilariously wasted at a New Year's Eve party that your fellow revelers appear tempted to follow up "Auld Lang Syne" with "No No Hey Hey Kiss Him Goodbye." Then, while being escorted home along a wooded path, stub a cigar out on the second shrine of the "beast monkey god," which the local sheriff explicitly warned you not to do, thereby sealing a silver-skinned, faceless leper to attack. Finally, surrender to the rabid animalism of your shiny new mystical cause, granting, granting and bring acquiescence even as they capture and torture and leper to save your world-class dickwad soul. *Yule* — the perfect twist!

Though generally faithful to the 1950 *Psycho*-*Killing* tale it is based upon, *Mark of the Beast* transpires the action from a North Indian British colonial outpost to a rain-soaked rural North American village. Really a matter of budget? Perhaps. An amalgam of *West* (*Emile Mongrel*) *Hole* and *An American Werewolf in London* does sound like a pricey proposition. But the shift also suits the film's more obvious desire to update the parable about the persistence of evil, reactionary darkness for an age that our modernists do own refinement. For example, Kipling chose not to detail the torture of the leper ("This part is not to be printed"), while the film, in an unstable nod to widely broadcast, visceral post-9/11 horrors, is not so demure.

Excessive cinematography only highlights the distance of the supposedly plausible short journey from action and persecutor. "As we fought for Hector's soul with the silver man in that room," the pre-cast is similar — portrayed with shimmering rapture by genre stalwart Debbie Rochon — muses, "we diagnosed ourselves further."

Moment of the story? If you want to keep your inner child bottled up, party with fewer saccharine asholes.

SHAWN MCGIBBIE

LAST CHANCE LANCE



GUILLERMO DEL TORO AND THE MAKERS OF **MAMA**  
SET A NEW STANDARD FOR MATERNAL MALEVOLENCE

# LOVE FOR MOTHER ONLY



**A**S ANYONE WHO JUST WENT THROUGH THANKSGIVING OR CHRISTMAS WITH THEIR FAMILY CAN ATTEST, TRUE HORROR STARTS AT HOME. THAT'S THE CONCEPT BEHIND **MAMA**, THE FEATURE DEBUT OF SPANISH DIRECTOR ANDRÉS MUCHIETTI, WHO BASED IT ON HIS THREE-MINUTE SHORT FROM 2006, TITLED **MAMA**.

"We do commercials in Spain and we're mostly known for comedy," says Muchietti, who co-wrote *Mother* with his sister, Barbara Muchietti (who also served as a producer). "We made the *Mother* short to show people we could do something with suspense and horror because that's all we ever wanted. People who saw it were so intrigued by the story behind *Mother* that it got us interested in playing with the idea of what would happen if these two girls were raised by a ghost."

*Mama* is the story of Victoria (Megan Charpentier) and Lily (Isabella Nizkow), who were abandoned in the woods as infants and raised by the movie's spongy spirit, which might be the ghost of their murdered mother. When discovered five years later, they're sent to live with their irresponsible uncle (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau: *Game of Thrones*) and punk-painted aunt (Jessica Chastain: *Texas Killing Fields*). But just as a new family starts to form, *Mama* returns to claim her children. She might have a soft spot for the little girls, but her attitude toward the surrogate parents who aim to replace her is downright relentless.

The film was produced by Guillermo del Toro, who came on board after seeing the short. He was on hand along with the Muchietti during the film's on-set press day in Toronto last fall to discuss his love for the tale.

"I think mothers are one of the scariest figures in horror," he explains. "Hitchcock made a career out of movies about horrible mothers. The scariest thing about a mother is the suffocating instinct and ultimately the possessiveness. What I thought was very scary was [*Mother's*] love, the worst kind of love."

That perversion of maternal devotion has been a long-running theme in horror movies and literature, birthing such classics as *Psycho*, *Rosemary's Baby* and, more recently, the gory French shocker *Julie*. According to del

Toro, Universal was quick to see the potential in the Muchietti siblings' twisted family fable.

"I said to them, 'All you need to do is put a tapeworm on the package that says, 'A mother's love is forever.' That's absolutely horrifying and something everyone can relate to.'"

Details of that haunted family dynamic were kept under wraps, but journalists were shown early test footage of the movie's centerpiece, *Mama* herself, a gampy, shadowy thing that creeps around with unnatural, jerky movements. The ghost is a combination of the crawling, long-haired oryx ghosts that populate *J-horror* and the fiery tale-like aesthetic common to modern Spanish genre films such as *The Orphanage* (whose director, Juan Antonio Bayona, has also been championed by del Toro). In order to preserve their vision for *Mama*, the filmmakers eschewed digital spookery in favour of making the spirit an entirely flesh-and-blood creature.

"Neither Andy or I are fans of CG because you lose control," explains Barbara Muchietti. "Even if [the CG team] is amazing, they aren't you and they can start to direct their own movie."

Instead, the Muchietti hired six-foot-seven actor Javier Botet to play the thulhu ghost. Botet, best known for his role as the emaciated, demonically possessed girl lurking in the penthouse of the apartment building in *REC*, plays the character as a sort of human puppet.

"There was no action," assures Barbara. "We did a mechanical test for him just using straps for his movement. We showed it to Guillermo and he just flipped out and showed it to everybody in the studio. So I think Javier's control was the last one signed."

Andrés adds, "Six guys pull strings attached to his legs. You see something that is unreal, but it's still real because there is an actor there. He's also filmed backwards and at various speeds. I wanted to combine several techniques so you can't quite tell what's going on. It's anti-natural and something that you can't figure out... As a child I loved these [*Amadeo Modigliani* paintings with very stretched faces and empty eyes that we had in our house, which always scared me a lot. It's a place where generally monsters don't go. For some reason, they tend to come from very common places." ☐

## REISSUES



## DAS JACKBOOT

DEATH SHIP (1980) DVD/Blu-ray

Starring George Kennedy, Richard Crenna

and Nick Martinov

Directed by Allen Roboff

Written by John Roberts, Jack Hill and David H. Lewis

Scorpion Releasing

This Canadian tax-shelter shocker is one of those rare films that works its way into your nightmares on multiple levels. By combining creepy haunted-house thrills with sickening Holocaust atrocities that invoke a level of true horror rarely portrayed in feature films, *Death Ship* offers a unique level of discomfort. Unfortunately maligned on release, the Canadian/UK co-production is a surprisingly sorrowful vessel that manages to keep its high concept afloat with a few disturbing moments, a fine cast and a distinct — though implausible — twist. When their luxury cruise ship sinks, a handful of survivors, adrift in a lifeboat, spot a large, early-quot Garmon warship anchored in the middle of the sea. They climb aboard to investigate, only to discover the vessel seems to be possessed by irrelevant spirits of the past — the rusty

machinery leaps to life to knock some of them overboard, while the luxury liner captain (George Kennedy, at his heinous best) seems to be under the control of some mysterious force. But it's only when a few survivors head below deck and discover a room draped in swastikas that the full depth of the ship's evil past really becomes apparent.

Co-written by exploitation titan Jack Hill, who collaborated on several Canadian tax shelter films at the time, *Death Ship* sets the high-water mark for the haunted house-at-sea premise, using rusty anchors, broken dials and echo-filled metal hallways to update the traditional gothic touches of decay and ruin. But it's the startling use of Nazi imagery that really sets *Death Ship* apart from its contemporaries, in one incredibly effective sequence, two castaways discover a corpse-lined barracks as menacing Nazi radio calls and speeches play over the loudspeakers. Reeling from the discovery, they stumble into a nearby room containing a film projector that continues showing Hitler propaganda on a blank wall even after it's been smashed to pieces.

Released near the beginning of the slasher boom, it's not too surprising that *Death Ship's* somewhat old-fashioned approach didn't make

many waves at the time, as it draws more influence from classic Irvin Allen disaster films than teen stalkers. But, free of such direct comparisons, it's a surprisingly solid chiller that can be appreciated on its own terms as one of the finest radical movies ever to hit the high seas.

PAUL CORPSE

## THE POWER OF DALLAMANO COMPELS YOU!

THE NIGHT CHILD (1974) DVD

Starring Richard Johnson, Nicole Elm and Jeanne Cassidy

Directed by Massimo Dallamano

Written by Massimo Dallamano, Franco Ravetto

and Leone Troncone

Arrow Video

After achieving international recognition as the cinematographer on *A Fistful of Dollars* and *For a Few Dollars More*, Massimo Dallamano seized the megaphone himself, directing several stylish (yet often neglected) works, such as the accomplished giallo *What Have They Done to Solange?* (1972). *The Night Child* — one of Dallamano's final projects before his untimely death in a car accident — is a stately serving of the "pasta-possession" subgenre that briefly choked the Italian box-office during the mid-1970s in the wake of *The Exorcist*.

Zombie's Richard Johnson plays a widowed documentary filmmaker who travels to Spoleto with his emotionally disturbed daughter, Emily (Nicole Elm of *Deep Red*), to research satanic art. He finds himself drawn to one particular painting that depicts the death of a woman as a child looks on — a scenario that evokes Emily's own recurring memories of witnessing her mother's demise. A series of disturbing visions and events unfold, but is Emily merely tormented by nightmares or is the painting beginning to exert an insidious influence on her?

*The Night Child* has often been viewed as nothing more than a comparative cash-in, but is in fact considerably less prescriptive than unsympathetic Exorcist-clones such as *Beyond the Door* and *The Androids' Dream of Perfect Love*. Eschewing pea-green soup and spinning heads, Dallamano's measured direction imbues the derisive script (which also echoes *Don't Look Now*) with a hard-won sense of conviction and atmosphere — even allowing for some awkward gestures toward Freudian theory with its insoucious undercurrent.

British import Arrow's region-free DVD is an inspired addition to their growing range of titles, but *The Night Child* has not been afforded the same copious extras found on their more illustrious re-



leaves (no doubt befitting its obscure status). Instead we get two trailers, the customary collector's booklet written by the ever-dependable Calum Waddell and a concise mini-documentary on the Italian exorcist genre featuring insights from director Luigi Cozzi (Covenanted), screenwriter Antonio Tanti (A Car in the Brain) and genre critic Paolo Zilli.

Essential viewing for Eurohorror connoisseurs, this welcome release should assist in bringing DeLamano some small measure of overdue recognition.

MICHAEL GOYLE

## MURDERED SHE WAS

### AMERICAN NIGHTMARE (1983) DVD

Starring Lawrence Day, Lauren Zane and Michael Ironside  
Directed by Don Mancini  
Written by John Shoopard, John Scott and Steven Blake  
Composers Released

Taking viewers on a whirlwind tour of Toronto's '80s-era porno theatres, back-alley strip bars and drug-soaked slum experiments in search of a killer targeting sex-isle workers, *American Nightmare* is a whodunit that would make Angela Lansbury choke on her tea. The depressing *Conspiration* entry is one of the most offbeat and sleazy horror films you're likely to see, yet underneath all the seedy trappings, it's fairly tame, mostly using its lurid plot to dress up a pedestrian thriller with some nudity and kink.

The film begins as Eric (Lawrence Day) arrives in the big city to track down his sister, Isabelle (Alexandra Paul), who has been missing for several days. Ironically, their father (Tom Harvey), the corporate mogul behind a charity supporting underprivileged children, has lost interest in helping his own kids, and his neglect has taken a toll. After discovering up Isabelle's transvestite neighbour, Eric charts what his sister was a stripper who slid into prostitution to support her drug habit. It appears that this sordid existence may have led her directly into the clutches of a shadowy serial killer stalking the streets for emotionally distressed women. Detective Skylar (Michael Ironside, in an impressive early role) is on the case, but Eric knows that only he can get the necessary mood information from Isabelle's former strip-club companions to crack the case.

Q: What comparisons are often thrown around when discussing *American Nightmare*—most likely because of the film's unseen, black-gloved suspect—but that label doesn't even begin to do justice to the film. In *American Nightmare* there are few and far between, and the film is just plain old ugly and unpleasant, less interested in creating a memorable style or mood than it is in pounding home some disheartening truths about a society where every emotional trans-



Queen of the Damned

action is also a monetary one. Don Mancini captures the story's aggressive subjugation of women with the unflinching eye of a documentary filmmaker, but that doesn't make it any easier to watch, even with a distracting amount of female flesh and exotic Times Square backdrops.

Chock full of noticeable Toronto-area landmarks and featuring an early producing credit for *The Wizard of Gore* himself, Ray Singer, *American Nightmare* is neither from the United States nor likely to give you bad dreams—it's only a guaranteed feel-bad time for slasher aficionados and mystery buff alike.

PAUL CORPSE

## FANGS FOR NUTHIN'

### QUEEN OF THE DAMNED (2002) DVD

Starring Stuart Townsend, Margaret Moulton and Ashley Judd  
Directed by Michael Bay  
Written by Scott Abbott and Michael Petroni  
Warner Brothers

Let's just say you don't fall asleep within the first ten minutes of *Queen of the Damned*, and out of some masochistic curiosity, you manage to sit through this film all the way. Don't be surprised if the aftertaste of cheap latex and late-'90s new rock leaves you wishing for that 100 minutes of your life back.

The film is loosely based on Anne Rice's second and third Vampire Chronicles novels, although the script is sometimes so bare that it's hard to see how the character of Lestat the vampire is tied to the version Tom Cruise portrayed in the first adapta-

tion, 1994's *Interview with the Vampire*.

Here, Lestat (Stuart Townsend, *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*) returns from decades of slumber after being roused by a Wu Metal band. Lestat joins them as their lead singer, goes public about his vampirism and his flashy image garners the band fame and popularity. This poses off the other vampires of the world who wish to remain hidden, however, it also grabs the attention of Akasha (the late R&B singer Aaliyah), an ancient vampire who has been in hibernation and is now set on seducing Lestat, making him her king and ultimately sating everyone who stands in their way.

It's difficult to view this as a sequel to *Interview with the Vampire* when the film makes you feel like you're being held hostage at a Korn concert. The scenes seem to have a hard time staying awake, and other than one or two disappointing fight scenes and a series of over-produced set designs, the whole thing becomes downright tedious to sit through after about 45 minutes.

The Blu-ray edition comes with remastered audio and is packed with loads of extra features (director's commentary, Lestat music videos, pig reel, deleted scenes and full concert reel), as well as a tribute to Aaliyah, who died in a plane crash before the film's release. But no amount of extra footage can save something that was (in the words of Anne Rice herself) "a doomed project" to begin with.

JESSA SOBCZUK





# LATE-NITE ARCHIVE

FILE: *Hiroshima Horrors*

by Paul Corio

**H**onor fans have long recognized the subtle difference in the way various countries choose to scare home-grown viewers but, until recently, the subject had not received much academic attention. Only contemporary works such as Adam Lazarovitch's *Shocking Representation* and Linik Harker's *The Wounds of Nothing* have started to look at how a culture's horror cinema is emblematic of traumatic historical events. Not surprisingly, both books devote large sections to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that have echoed through Japanese horror films for decades. It's a theme that's also at the heart of *When Horror Comes to Shochiku*, a new release from Criterion's Eclipse imprint. This incredible four-DVD set paints a picture of a country still in the grip of nuclear uneasiness in the late 1960s, trying to bandage the deep wounds of the past with a dose of camp madness.

One of Japan's more prestigious studios, Shochiku, has produced films for Akira Kurosawa, Takashi Miike and Takashi Kiuchi. The company made its first foray into sci-fi horror in 1967 with a safe bet — a straight-up *Angu* flick. This early kitschy *The X from Outer Space* is a movie about a movie in which a Martian space is brought to Earth and mutates into Galsia, a particularly odd monster that looks like one of the ships from *War of the Worlds* (1953) crash-landed on Godzilla's head. But what's notable is the film's relentless focus on destroyed cityscapes. Never before had a kaju movie been so concerned with the aftermath of warlike destruction of buildings, planes and people. Director Kôzû Nishimura deeply probes the country's post-bomb trauma as *The X from Outer Space* becomes a virtual reimagining of Hiroshima's destruction.

Nuclear panic also looms large over Nishimura's 1968 follow-up *Genshoku*, a loud and borderline incoherent tale of insect infestations, mad science and a race for a missing hydrogen bomb. This time, the WASPish concentration camp survivor of all line breeds killer bees to help Russian



*The X from Outer Space*

Communists get revenge on the Nazis, or something. Given a Cold War atomic twist to what's otherwise a typical killer catnip movie is a neat trick and there are a few great visuals to reinforce events of events as the heroine takes down planes and steadily enigmata the heroes. But a note of melodramatic subtlety and some lacustrine effects make this entry the weakest of the four films, despite an admirable streak of satire capped with a meshroom-dust finale that serves as a striking reminder of post-strife.

Undoubtably, the most sober and terrifying entry in Miyake Sato's *Doku, Body Snatcher from Hell* (1968), a distinctly gassy cliff or le-vision of the *Body Snatchers* (1955) that makes herowing use of flashbacks of Vietnam atrocities and nuclear mobilization. The survivors of a hijacked plane that crashes in parts unknown come up against grey, gelatinous alien creatures that slip into their target's brains, turning them into vampires. From bright red skies to glowing orange spaceport, *Doku* is a candy-colored film that somehow is even more downbeat than *Genshoku*, as it's discovered that the aliens plan to reanimate the entire human

race for its willingness to destroy itself.

Finishing up the set is the 1968 black-and-white, obscurely *The Living Skeleton* (poster pictured), a haunting low-budget film about the ghosts of the post-strife — literally. Creepy, stylized under-water skeletons keep bobbing up to the surface, the unfortunate victims of a pirate attack years ago. The sister of one of the victims discovers that the ship where the massacre took place has returned as a ghostly presence, seemingly to exact revenge on the bloodthirsty pirates. A highly atmospheric film where the restless dead are finally given the peace they deserve, *The Living Skeleton* may be the only film in this set that doesn't reference the atom bomb, but the parallels are still clear — though ostensibly a revenge-from-beyond scenario, the movie takes a somber, ceremonial approach that seems more focused on honouring the dead than gory retribution.

Pulsating with post-strife anxiety, these four films may occasionally fall into kitsch but they're also disturbing cultural artifacts that provide a window on how Japan coped with the aftermath of World War II. Essential viewing for Asian horror fans and definitely worth a look for adventurous cult film aficionados, Shochiku's latest dip into the genre pool is an unmistakable attempt to expiate and cope with the country's most tragic trauma. **B**



A close-up, high-contrast image of the character Leatherface from the movie Texas Chainsaw 3D. He is wearing a mask made of human skin and holding a large, rusty chainsaw. The background is dark and smoky.

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# CAME FROM BOWEN'S BASEMENT



DRIVE-INS, DELETE BINS AND OTHER SINS

## The Caine Mutiny

by John W. Bowen

**R**emember how Peter Benchley wrote a couple of fairly successful novels immediately after *Jaws*, and both were made into movies, one of which (1977's *The Deep*) locked off with five minutes of Jacqueline Bisset in a wet T-shirt? Yeah, well, this is the other one. The good news is that *The Island* (1980) doesn't take a crash dive into tedium the way its predecessor does once the Bisset boobage is over; it may be an overambitious mess that bombed in theaters, but it's big, loud, violent and gloriously silly, and hence of some interest to the *Rue Morgue* faithful. It's also got Michael Caine as a journalist with appalling painting skills, and a warlike dream team of 1970s character actors including David Warner (*The Crown*, *Straw Dogs*), Zakas Mokas (*The Sergeant and the Rainbow*), Brad Sullivan (*Star Shot*) and Frank Middleton (Barry Lyndon, *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* and more BSC sitcoms than you could shake a banger at).

Caine's character, reporter Blair Maynard, jumps at the opportunity to cover a series of recent disappearances of various fishing charter boats and yachts in the northwestern Caribbean. Trouble is, he takes the assignment before remembering he has custody of his twelve-year-old son Justin (Jeffrey Frank) for the weekend. No problem — what could go wrong with the kid in tow? He appraises the understatedly cynical twain with a promise of a Disney World trip, then appraises him a bit more in Miami by buying him a handgun when the Disney World trip beside him apart. Huh. Had you there were some serious parenting issues here.)

Soon enough, Maynard charts a deep fight to a nearby island on a cargo plane ("The somewhatish has propellers!" Justin laments) piloted by



swearily-faced Gullwren, whose indignity is compounded tenfold by Bermuda shorts and black knee socks. Upon reaching the obscure island, the three barely escape with their lives, after hitting the runway without landing gear, and are subsequently informed by the local constable (Jokoe) that there may not be another plane or boat out for several days. With time to kill, father and son borrow a small boat for a spot of fishing, but after attempting to rescue a would-be shipwreck victim, they're overpowered by a bunch of really stinky pirates who have been living in it's most complete isolation since their forebears put down roots in the area almost 300 years earlier. But instead of just killing their captives on the spot, the pirates hatch a plan that may help solve their inbreeding problem: they'll brainwash Justin into becoming one of them, thereby introducing some badly needed fresh genes into their fetid gene pool. They'll know they've been successful when Justin murders his father. Turning the kid against Caine initially isn't such a tall order, as he's already pretty resentful, but will they be able to win him over completely? Stay tuned, me hearties.

Speaking of which, there isn't a single "Ah, matey!" or "Awest, ya swab!" or "Buggar the

bossan's mate!" to be heard in this script, but the pirates do speak in some bizarre kind of patois that appears to be a mash-up of 17th-century English and local dialects. Well, at least that's how it sounds to my uneducated ear, I may be wrong, but I'm no linguist. In fairness, there are some decent one-liners elsewhere from various civilians (First Act Cannon Fodder Guy "You don't want a proteologist to do a nose job" Other First Act Cannon Fodder Guy "Then you'd look like a real asshole.") And these filthy, denarily devastated modern-day pirates probably bear a much closer resemblance to their ancestors than any found in would-be period pieces starring Johnny Depp or Emol Rynn. Detracting somewhat from the noble realism, however, we've got a climax involving a coast guard cutter manned by a crew of incompetent, pooch-screwing buttoons, a bunch of pirates who are used to firing muskets and the occasional handgun suddenly becoming proficacious with military-issue automatic weapons, and then Caine himself, who levels the playing field by... new, I ain't got't there.

Shout! Factory's new DVD/Blu-ray release of *The Island* certainly looks and sounds good, but aside from a few trailers and audio subtitle options, there are no extras. As in NONE. A what? A scene index? Where'd you get that sense of entitlement? Oh, there, huh? Well, get the hell out of my basement and bring me back one, wouldja, ya scurvy dog?



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Tony Rodriguez, et al.  
IDW

# BLOOD IN FOUR COLOURS

BY PEDRO CABEZUELO

The last few years have seen comics invaded by a number of creators crossing over from other media. Novelists, directors, actors and musicians have all been lured by the siren call of the comics industry. Billy Martin, guitarist for the band Good Charities, is the latest member of this growing club; he co-wrote and drew *Witrol the Hunter*, a new six-issue series from IDW.

Set in the fictional city of Basilika in 2127, *Witrol* is a vigilante desperately trying to defend his hometown from a vampire uprising led by Lord Barthus. While he struggles with hordes of bloodsuckers, *Witrol* also clashes with local authorities known as the Defense Initiative, as well as his own inner demons, which include pill addiction and some serious father issues.

*Witrol*, co-written with Brent Allen, is Martin's first professional comics project. Although his career path has been dominated by music, Martin always had a desire to work in animation or comics and has had plenty of opportunities to flex his drawing muscles as a graphic artist and clothing designer. He finally decided to make his comic book dream come true and combine it with his lifelong love of horror and monsters.

"I knew it would involve supernatural creatures and unique weapons," says Martin. "The most appealing part of working on a horror book, for me, is creating a world that feels dark, menacing and hopeless and trying to transport the reader there. I love creating worlds, characters and scenarios but as for putting the pieces together and creating dialogue, I'm too scatterbrained for that. So I brought my mess of ideas to Brent Allen — who happens to be great at that stuff — along with some art, and he literally sent me a script the next day."

Another self-professed horror fan, Allen also has limited experience in the comics field, but has been writing for most of his life. He's also no stranger to collaborating with Martin, having worked with the musician on scripts in the past, including a cartoon and a fantasy storyline.

For *Witrol*, the duo wanted to craft a tale that not only had plenty of monster hunting but also dealt with the horrors that emerge when people are forced to confront their own darkness: "We aren't solely focusing on how badass *Witrol* is and how he can do things most people can't," says Allen. "We focus on the thought process of a person that is basically the only hope for humanity and how he hates the attention, is scared to get close to anybody and is completely addicted to pain pills. Throw all of this into a so-fu-horror setting with some beautiful art that is going to completely shock people, and I think you'll see something that is fresh and compelling."

As it turns out, Martin's drawing style at first may not look suited to a horror project — at least, not a serious one. Martin admits to being heavily influenced by Disney, and does realize that people may mistake the book for a horror comedy, but assures fans that is definitely not the case. "I love horror, so to combat the 'cartoony-ness' of my drawing style we went over the top with the gore. Lots of beheadings, hearts torn out, blood and guts! The vibe of the book is definitely serious."



*Witrol the Hunter*: Sets its suspense tale in a brutal, dystopian future

And just to make sure readers get the book's tone, Martin has crafted *Witrol*'s very own soundtrack, available as a free download inside the comic. "I've been doing remakes and producing music for other artists under the name Villain, which coincidentally is a shout-out to my love of the dark side. One day it hit me that putting out a soundtrack to the book would be a perfect way to tie my music and art together. I think it will definitely enhance the experience of reading the book and bring an extra dimension to the moodiness and horror. It goes along nicely with my love of creating dark worlds and feelings, adding a soundtrack just solidifies the whole thing."

*Witrol the Hunter* hits shelves in February.

FOLLOW PEDRO ON TWITTER @PCABEZUELO



**Cai McDonald** is still coming to terms with being turned into a ghoul, but when a councilman is murdered by a werewolf on national television, he decides to investigate anyhow. Along the way, he runs into a gang of angry vampires, befriends a police officer named Wheatley and is ambushed by a pack of weres. In other words, business as usual. Readers expecting Steve Niles' usual humor, blood and mayhem won't be disappointed, as each is delivered in spades with strong support from Christopher Mitten's artwork. Niles also manages to sow some seeds for future storylines, most robustly with Wheatley and his mysterious agenda. Whose side is he really on? Time will tell, but for now, *Criminal Macabre: They Fight by Night* serves as a nicely self-contained tale that also furthers McDonald's overall storyline.



**Red** opens with a group of teachers and schoolchildren being massacred by Madler Red, a masked psychopath reminiscent of Heath Ledger's Joker from *The Dark Knight*. Red is eventually stopped by his Batman equivalent, but not in time to save any lives. Flash forward ten years, and readers are introduced to a mentally disturbed man who is convinced he can help police solve the current slate of brutal murders plaguing the city in this man Madler Red, now reformed? Or has Madler Red only ever nested as a product of this man's damaged mind? Instead of a simple Batman/Joker pastiche, this is actually a thought-provoking and truly disturbing study of persona, reality and perception. Riley Rossmo's art is fantastic, colour is used for the modern sequences, while the flashbacks play out in stark black and white, with random streaks of red. The two distinct visual styles complement the splintered nature of the story perfectly, resulting in a nightmare and very confident debut.

**Augusta likes to** regale her younger siblings with stories about how she was born as an otherworlder and one day floated down from the sky to become part of their family. People around her dismiss her stories as childish



barney, but the sudden arrival of the Strabbi—a creature that's part snake, part rabbit—isn't exactly Augusta's idea of a fun time. But before she can regain her lost memories and determine why she ended up on Earth, she must face the monstrous Onipho, a deified Mesopotamian and the terrifying Balloona. Augusta Wind is cut from the same classic fairy-tale mold as the Oz series: a young hero(ine) is plunged into an unknown world filled with danger, where marauders lurk behind every corner. J. M. DeMatteis spins a good introductory yarn, peppered with plenty of delightful and grotesque characters. Rosalia Gagliardi's art, however, takes a bit of getting used to. While he has the right aesthetic for this bizarre story, it feels as if his drawings are cramped by the standard comic page size with a lot of detail lost. Not a deal-breaker but it does lessen the impact of the story.



**With the title** Edgar Allan Poe's *The Conqueror Mores*, there's no question as to where this yarn draws its inspiration from. Having just murdered his wife and her lover, Colonel Mores brags his friends to a

traveling puppet show, little making him is about to witness a stage re-enactment of his crime. Soon, both the puppets and the audience fall prey to Mores's violent outburst and the sudden appearance of the reclusive conqueror warrior. While the story itself is somewhat derivative and takes as much inspiration from Shakespeare and EC Comics as it does from Poe, Richard Corben's stunning art elevates the material and makes this a must-buy. Every panel is gorgeous, with the artist making even the mundane a wonder to behold. Luckily, he depicts amounts of blood and gore as equally mesmerizing.

**Usually I find** holiday-themed books to be useless filler, but *Mars Attacks the Holidays* has shored that notion. Each of the four stories see Martians attacking a late-year holiday: Halloween, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. And each narrative manages to brilliantly weave the traditions with the carnage. For instance, Martians infiltrate a small town as trick-or-treaters, convert a group of soldiers on the Inaugural Veterans' Day parade, and finally find unexpected common ground with humans as Christmas. Every story is a winner, mixing healthy doses of humor, carnage and even pathos. Well worth tracking down, even in the post-holiday season.



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## NINTH CIRCLE

BOOKS

## REEL TERROR

David Kewen  
St. Martin's Press

Horror is still viewed by the mainstream as an outcast genre at best and an embarrassing, unwanted bastard child at worst. California-based writer David Kewen makes neither apologies nor concessions for this, and his new book—chronicling cinematic horror exhaustively from the silent era up to and including franchises such as *Saw* and *Paranormal Activity*—is all the richer for it.



Kewen's impressive resume includes the book *Bang Your Head: The Rise and Fall of Heavy Metal* and credits in *LA Weekly*, *Turner Classic Movies*, *Gator World* and (shuffles papers around)... oh look, *Rue Morgue*. Teeming with quotes, notes and anecdotes from contemporary filmmakers, producers, reviewers, actors and studio executives for too numerous to list here, *Rue/Terror* combines historical perspective with scholarly critique, examining blockbusters and cult classics alike against a backdrop of world events and industry sea changes that spanned there. (Some may find Kewen's inclusion of so many interview quotes from outside periodicals and books, including *Rue Morgue*, a drain on credibility I personally do not.)

Kewen also exhibits one other finely honed instinct that's crucial to a project like this: he knows how to furnish plenty of detail about the films, the filmmakers, their collaborators and senses without ever crossing that fateful line into tedious trivia. For the dedicated nerd, admittedly, there really aren't that many revelations to be had here (well, okay, finding out that David Cronenberg passed on offers to direct both *Flashdance* and *The Godfather* might chafe on any nuchos, which counts

for something), but having it all meticulously melted out in a single volume, in more or less chronological order, is a bounty the faithful will find hard to resist.

Writing a comprehensive critical history of a century of horror films is one of those things many of us at *Rue Morgue* dream of doing. And let's face it, most of us won't. That Kewen has managed it at all is commendable, that he's made it this completely readable is all the more impressive.

JOHN W. BOWEN

## NO TRAVELER RETURNS: THE LOST YEARS OF BELA LUGOSI

Gary D. Rhodes and Bill Kattenberger  
BearManor Media

After achieving international stardom with his portrayal of Count Dracula in Universal's 1931 classic vampire film, Bela Lugosi appeared in numerous genre movies, including *Monsters in the Rue Morgue* (1932), *White Zerkow* (1932), *The Raven* (1935) and *Son of Frankenstein* (1939). But, by the mid-1940s, the actor—who had become the victim of typecasting and was presented with fewer and smaller roles—would find that opportunities for him to appear in Hollywood films were becoming nearly non-existent. In an effort to remain busy and support his family, Lugosi had to turn to alternative venues to earn a living.

In *No Traveler Returns: The Lost Years of Bela Lugosi*, authors Gary D. Rhodes (whose previous work includes the excellent 2007 tome *Bela Lugosi—Dreams and Nightmares*) and Bill Kattenberger provide an insightful look at the years 1945 to 1961, a lesser-known period in Lugosi's life, during which the actor—by then largely ignored by Hollywood, but still very much adored by fans—found much of his employment away from film sets. Appearing in only a handful of films during that time, among them *The Body Snatcher* (1945) and *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948), Lugosi's work (which often times capitalized on his Dracula image) consisted mainly of performances in summer stock, on radio and televi-

sion, in nightclub acts and even headlining several kind "spook shows" and magic acts.

Though dealing with pain and advancing age, Lugosi was nevertheless determined to take projects when he could, often accepting demanding work so that his son, Bela G., would be able to attend boarding school and grow up in a stable environment while the actor and his wife travelled the country working.

In contrast to some depictions of the person icon as an aloof, difficult-to-know person, Rhodes and Kattenberger present a portrait of an affable family man who tried to make the most of his changing situation in order to provide for his son. Featuring a timeline of the actor's various performances during this period, and an afterword by Bela G. Lugosi, this beautifully illustrated book, filled with numerous never-before-seen family photos, promotional material and more, is fascinating, essential reading for any Lugosi fan.

JAMES GUNDELL

## ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE! FIGHTBACK

Stephen Jones, ed.  
Running Press

Fans of zombie lore are clamoring for something—anything—to bring new life to this saturated genre. The second installment of Stephen Jones' *Zombie Apocalypse!* series, *Fightback*, continues to develop an intriguing new genre

story through multiple pieces contributed by some of modern horror's most accomplished writers. However, the book suffers from a fatal flaw: it prevents it from being a true classic.

*Zombie Apocalypse! Fightback* unfolds in the same epistolary format as the first book: letters, diary entries, memos, comics, Twitter and iCloud are all used as media to tell stories and further the narrative. In the first book, the scope of the pandemic is revealed to be a virus spread through flies that live in the earth beneath an ancient, cursed





No Traveler Returns: Rick Logan  
in *Murders in the Rue Morgue*

church in London. *Flightback* begins by tracing the roots of the virus' architect, 18th-century "lord of flies" Thomas Moreby. Along the way, the virus chews its way through Europe and eventually North America, and this is where the writers have the most fun. Anne Bilsen's "Here When It Sizzles" follows an embattled columnist who grudgingly tries to cover heels couture in the zombie-reimagined fashion capital, while Simon Strentz's "WOMBIEY" is told artfully through the tweets of a social-media-savvy punk hiding in a blacked-out Nagano Falls wax museum. There's even a *Rolling Stone* article about the hot new trend of zombie UFC fighting, and a few attempts at social commentary, with characters struggling over the ethics of testing on zombies and zombie rights.

Aside from a few light moments, the book is bogged down by too many chapters of tech-speak and overlong government missives that devolve predictably. The most haunting piece is in Peter Crowther's "Corpse Gas" — a transcription of security camera video footage of two brothers arguing in a long-deserted resort, dourly and sadly reminiscing about their

## THE GRIM READER

THE NEW YORK GRIMPENDIUM

J.W. Ocker

The Grimpendium Plus

Wanna see Typhoid Mary's grave? Make a pilgrimage to one of Dostoevsky's former haunts? See the firehouse from *Ghosts* (and/or the World Anatomy Library)? If so,

J.W. Ocker's got ya covered. Though his New York Grimpendium is dotted out with some questionable entries (Dostoevsky's Zero memorial? Really?) and this "guide" has no maps, there's fascinating info aplenty in Ocker's playful prose. Don't wait NYC without it.

DAVE ALLEN



HAIR SIDE, FLESH SIDE

Helen Marshall

OnLine Publications

Filled with bizarre, lyrical and occasionally religion-tinged short stories, Helen Marshall's debut collection reads like a fanciful walk through her dark imagination. One of the most notable tales, "Sandflesh," is about a woman who finds a lost Jane Austen manuscript written beneath her skin. Strangely touching, disturbing and weird as hell, Marshall proves herself a potent new talent.

JESSA BOACH



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EARTHING PUBLICATIONS  
MARKS THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
*Weaveworld*  
WITH AN ILLUSTRATED EDITION OF  
OLIVE BARKER'S DEMENTED  
MAGI-CARPET RIDE

# ANGUISH & ALCHEMY

by  
MICHAEL MITCHELL  
CONCEPT ARTIST AND ILLUSTRATOR  
APRIL SNELLINGS

**N**OW THAT HORROR AND FANTASY ARE SUCH COZY ROOMFELLOWS, IT'S HARD TO REMEMBER THAT, 25 YEARS AGO, THE GENRES WERE BARELY ON SPEAKING TERMS. Arthur Machen and H.P. Lovecraft explored the dark side of fantasy staples such as gods and sorcerers as far back as the 19th century and J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth was busy with readers, but the genres had gone their separate ways by the time the '80s horror literature boom rolled around. In 1987, Olive Barker's *Weaveworld*—now available as an illustrated 25th anniversary edition from Earthing Publications—sensationally took horror back to its fantastic roots and paved the way for today's popular fantasy/horror hybrids.

According to Barker, *Weaveworld*'s is a "story about storytelling." Throughout the course of the novel, people become words and words become objects—a cavelled book even plays a pivotal role in the narrative.

"The opening of *Sharnweald* says we are animals who tell stories," the author explains, referring to his 1988 novel about a wildlife photographer who confronts an ancient evil bent on the extinction of every animal on the planet. "And then it goes on to say why we tell stories: if we didn't, we wouldn't understand ourselves. I would have put that in *Weaveworld* had I known it at the time. But that is essentially what *Weaveworld* pretends."

Barker's dark fantasy epic concerns a race of supernatural beings known as the Seelkies (the original inhabitants of Eden), whose magical abilities draw humans to their folklore than in reality as broken and damaged—and to systematically hunt down and murder them. To escape persecution, the Seelkies use magic to erect themselves in the Faege, a world that is concealed in the threads of a rug. When the rug's woven guardian is killed by old age, the Faege is left vulnerable to Innocentists, an evil

Scound which who conjures a seemingly unstoppable entity called the Scourge to eradicate her own race.

Though it may sound tame for the author who brought us the gory, state-of-messed stacks of the *Melkaiser* universe, *Weaveworld* is very much a work of horror—donee-words graphically exploited; young men are ripped by a lustful, blinded hag who, hours later, gives birth to their monstrous offspring; eyeballs and penballs are scooped away. At one point, staple Barker they will even catch a reference to *Melkaiser's* Conantes (yes, not to hate, as the *Farpoint*) when Innocentists conjures the Rakse, a former lover who has been filled by the inter-dimensional deities, nummited and sent back into the world/world as an assassin.

These pressure images, copied with the book's University length (the mass-market paperback edition clocked in at 720 pages), have made *Weaveworld*'s tough sell for the screen. Barkers of a television adaptation have persisted for years, but networks have so far refused to commit to the ambitious project. With this new edition, though, *Weaveworld*'s monstrous deities will finally take form—on paper, at least.

"The parts I like the best are the lastly on shed elements of fantasy power," says artist Richard Kirk, who provided 30 original pen-and-

ink illustrations for Earthing's new edition. "Throughout the book there are those moments, such as the appearance of the Rakse, Innocentist's reconstruction from the bones and deal in the night, and the Scourge's garden...[that] form extremely powerful illustrative opportunities because by their nature they are extremely visual, and still allow a lot of room for interpretation. Olive leaves these intentions within the book like pockets of dogpiles in it first, where the reader's imagination fills and takes the space. As an illustrator, I fill some of these spaces with my own ideas and happily on it's something that is a three-way co-perse between author, reader and illustrator."

Unlike Barker works such as *The Doors of Blood* and *The Demoniac Game*, *Weaveworld* dabbles as much in the sublime as in the horrific. Throughout the novel, characters are given fleeting glimpses of Paradise, whether in the form of the original Garden of Eden or the world women into the rug, only to find that memory is a fragile thing that slips away all too easily, like something carried up out of air.

"Art is magic," says Barker. "Art is a transformative act. It's lead into gold. It takes the basest stuff of our nature—egotism, hatred, self-protective and so on—and by the alchemical system, lifts them from dead. Art is not something to be taken lightly." ☞



childhood as the world collapses around them. It goes to show that the zombie genre is like any other in fiction: the most indelible works are the ones that contain strong characters and an affecting story. And there simply aren't enough of these in *Zombie Apocalypse!* Fightback!

ALISON LAMB

## CHIRAL MAD: ANTHOLOGY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HORROR

Michael Bailey, Ed.

Written Backwards

So much of *Chiral Mad: Anthology of Psychological Horror* is not what it seems. Filled with unreliable narrators, nightmarish visions, themes of mental illness and explorative tales which travel the dark regions of the human psyche, this collection edited by award-winning author (and contributor) Michael Bailey is a must-read for horror fans of every ilk.

The contributors are a mix of well-known scribes and horror newcomers, but each has a distinct voice and take on the theme. Some stories are intensely visceral and immediate, such as Jack Ketchum's "Amid the Walking Wounded," which follows a man with an incessant, excruciating and inexplicable nosebleed as he slips deeper into a dreamlike consciousness, losing blood with each paragraph he takes. Other stories are deeply psychological, building horror through slow revelation, as in David Herman's "Daughter Her Aunt Graves," which reads like a dreamy supernatural love story — until you realize you are actually reading about a disturbing murder plot.



Many of the tales, as you might expect, deal with mental illness, bringing the reader into sometimes confusing and unknown territory. Ian Shoobridge's "White Pills" follows a patient who is taking experimental medication, and because his pills are about to run out, faces unknown withdrawal symptoms and impending hallucinations reality. There's also some exploration into the possible causes of psychological illness, abusive parents are a common theme here, as in Monica J. O'Rourke's "Five Adjectives," which pulls the reader into the perspective of a second-grade student struggling under the oppressive yet neglectful watch of her alcoholic father, or Aaron J. French's "Storm of Lightning," about an introspective serial killer with a split consciousness.

With each short story offering something original to the psychological horror subgenre, readers will find themselves well rewarded should they pick up this surprisingly solid, darkly disturbing read. Add to that the fact that all proceeds from sales of *Chiral Mad* will be going to support Down syndrome charities (the included stories — 23 originals and five reprints — were donated to the collection by the authors) and it's just one more good reason to get your claws on a copy of this book.

JESSA HORCZYK

## LIBRARY OF DAMNED

R. ANDREW WATKINS

If you're a regular *Uncle Magazine* reader, you know that books and video games are two of my passions. If you're a particularly astute reader, you may have picked up on a couple vampire television series and vampires. So when I stumbled across an announcement that had for David Middleton's *Un-Dead TV* (just now from Big Light Unseen Media), an exhaustive guide to over 60 years of the vampire on the small screen, I immediately had two thoughts: 1) put this on my Xmas list, stat, and 2) track down this like-minded TV buff for my column. I contacted Middleton on the camp of *Un-Dead TV*'s release to get the scoop on his bloody big (\$14 oversized pages) book of bloodsuckers.

Why a book on vampire television?

In 2006, I was tasked with reviewing the television season for the third edition of *J. Gordon Melton's The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead*. While researching the subject, I uncovered an overwhelming number of vampire appearances, many more than I could include in my contribution. I also discovered there was no single volume that specifically covers television vampires, they usually only get a cursory overview, listed within film listings.

All told, how long did it take you to research and write this?

After I completed Melton's project, my research continued for the better part of the next three years. Even as I was compiling the manuscript, I uncovered new appearances, although these quickly became less frequent and more obscure in nature. Even though *Un-Dead TV* has been published, the research is ongoing. I continue to catalogue new appearances, as well as seek out the wily obscure ones that I may have missed — and I'm posting these updates to the book's website, *un-dead.tv*.

How many of the TV shows listed did you actually watch?

I've included a selection of foreign-language productions, which were the hardest to track down, so much, I was only able to watch some of them. Overall, I've viewed about 75 percent of the English-language listings — roughly 1900 hours of programming.

How did you research the shows you weren't able to view?

It was my goal to cross-reference as much as I could, in order to provide the most accurate synopsis possible. This involved scouring previously published books, major online databases, fan forums — and even newspaper archives — anything that provided a hint about the production. I also went directly to the source: I used different social networks and websites to contact writers who penned several of these shows.

Did this project lead you to any surprising realizations about how the vampire is portrayed on TV?

There's no doubt in my mind that the vampire wouldn't be as ubiquitous in our popular culture were it not for television. In no other visual medium do you find such a broad and diverse spectrum of stories — and witnessed the popularity skyrocketed after the success of the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* series in 1997; however, prior to that, there was noticeable spikes in the frequency of related productions. There was one from 1965 to 69, was this driven by the popularity of the original *Dark Shadows* TV series? Or perhaps the spike from 1976 to 88 was a direct result of the success of *Acme Race's* (pseud.) interview with *Dr. Vampire*, first published in 1976.

What's your favorite vampire TV show and why? Did it change while you worked on this book?

Actually, this changed from week to week and month to month as I watched more and more productions. Overall, I'd say *Angel* — Joss Whedon's *Buffy* spinoff — is my favorite vampire television series. It's a shining example of TV drama at its best, supernatural or otherwise.

## UN-DEAD TV

The Vampire Book on Television



R. ANDREW WATKINS

Un-Dead TV

MONICA S. KIESLER

# THE FRIGHT GALLERY

CURATED BY GARY PULLIN

## THIS MONTH: FACES OF DEATH

**B**Y NOW, REMAINS OF MEN SHOULD be familiar with the creative force that is Chris Zar. We've featured him numerous times in these pages, including in *RENTED* for our Nightmares Gallery collection, where we asked him to submit a piece based on a personal nightmare. As it turns out, he's been channeling real night terrors ever since childhood, and the cover of his new book features one of his most famous renderings. The painting that book is named for, titled *Black Magick*, depicts a spectral being sporting a top hat, fleshy gas mask and a rusty gun, who stares ominously back at us, as curious and frightened as we are.

"I think *Black Magick* is my signature painting at this point," Zar allows. "It came to me in a flash, completely out of nowhere, and that rarely happens for me."

Similarly, the book's design is a thing of otherworldly beauty. Each painting, captured by fine-art photographer Larry Underhill, is presented on thick, matte black stock, with a spot of varnish enhancing each selection. It features an introduction by Guillermo del Toro, a spread of tattoos based on Zar's work with words by tattoo artist Paul Booth, and a personal note by Zar about his inspirational stepfather James Zar, who's an accomplished painter in his own right.

If the 44-year-old artist seems to have some high-profile friends, that's because by his mid-teens he was working at the studios of legendary effect artists Bill Sturgeon and Rick Baker. Zar is credited with sculpting *Hellboy's* Right Hand of Doom for Hellboy, and del Toro asked his production team to reference Zar's art for

the many prostheses that inhabit *Hellboy*. "While working in the effects world, Zar also befriended Adam Jones, fellow effects artist and guitarist for Tool. Jones had him develop creatures and concepts for the band's music videos, as well as visuals for their records and live shows. His art has become synonymous with the group ever since."

For the last five years, however, Zar has been making a big splash in the fine-art world, thanks to his unique monster portraits. They convey not only repulsion, but rather than forcing us to look away, they invite us to gaze deeper. The pieces often make us ponder our own sinfulness, fears and, ultimately, mortality.

"I think that artists are generally outsiders and monsters represent the outsider and how it feels to be an outsider—at least mine do, hopefully. It seems like a natural fit," says Zar.

Zar's future projects include an upcoming tour for the book, an annual sculpture show that he co-rites, called *Compelled*, and a documentary on him, which just wrapped up a successful Kickstarter campaign. It took a while, but the artist has finally come into his own on the strength of his nightmare canvases.

"I work a lot more and a lot harder now," he admits, "but it feels like it matters more than working exclusively on other people's projects. With each new piece I feel like I am working for my future. It is a lot more fulfilling."

*Black Magick* is available at [chriszar.bigcartel.com](http://chriszar.bigcartel.com)



Horror Novel (2012)



Compelled (2011)

# CLIVE BARKER



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# THE GORE MET

**MENU:** A BRUTAL MIX OF BLOOD, SWEAT AND DIY TEARS

"Brutal" is such a versatile word. It describes the type of gore movies I like to watch, the genre of death metal I like to listen to and, judging by the search results on the Internet Movie Database, it's also a popular film title!

The *Brutal* of interest here is the 2012 film written and directed by Michael Patrick Stevens, who also co-stars with A. Michael Baldwin of *Phantom* fame. This is a movie that merits a purposefully vague synopsis. It opens with a home-video montage that establishes Carl Gibson (Baldwin) as a devoted husband and father of two young children who finds himself chained half-naked to a wooden chair in a spartan basement with no knowledge of why he's there. The only other person in the house is a hulking, silent brute who responds to Gibson's frantic pleas to be let go by taking a belt sander to his head, carving him up with a Bowie knife and raining his forearm to the chair. At the point at which the viewer is ready to resign himself to another pointless torture flick, Stevens begins to reveal the layers of an emotionally complex exploration of crime, punishment and revenge.

That said, this wasn't the first film he intended to make. He had written a script called *The Haunted Caves* and received a number of offers to produce it, but nobody would allow him to direct it.

"I decided I was going to have to direct a low-budget film and show everybody what I could do," says Stevens. "To keep costs down I pretty much had to keep the location to one room, but how [would] I keep that interesting for 85 minutes? I was literally getting in the shower and the whole thing hit me. *Brutal* has so many meanings. The film is obviously brutal gore-wise, the guy's name is *Brutal*, but emotionally, which was more my focus, it's brutal."

Once the script was written, Stevens needed



Brutal

two actors who could carry the bulk of the film. He had developed an earlier relationship through Facebook with Baldwin and approached him for the role of Carl.

"The executive producers didn't want him," he says of the actor. "They didn't think he could reach the depth that Carl reached. I'd freeze the scenes in *Phantom*. All when he peels back his skull and the sphero's underneath his skin, and when he's trapped in the fire trying to kick his way out, and say, 'Look at the intensity, I can get 60 minutes of that.' I told him I wouldn't do it without him."

Stevens proved to be right, as Baldwin brought intensity in spades. Carving the part of *Brutal* was even difficult.

"It was not going to play *Brutal* at all. I'd hired a body-builder who was a UPS driver. This was in November we were filming. Two days before we started shooting, so many people had called in sick because it was cold and the season here in Oregon that they cancelled his vacation. Everybody else said that I should do it. 'You wrote it, you know the character.'"

With that problem solved, Stevens had special effects to contend with.

"We had a special effects gal who was coming up from California but she couldn't make it, so the co-director, Darío Rao, and the stunt supervisor and co-producer, Kent Lintrell, were going to do the special effects. Literally just ketchup, assen [Effects artist] Christine Kertum called one day before shooting because Kent had worked with her on [the TV series] *Grimm*, and she said she could make six of the eight days, and the other two days she would have her assistants there. The movie wouldn't have been near as effective without her practical effects."

When it came time to score the film, Stevens teamed to Alan Howarth, best known for his work with John Carpenter on such films as *Escape from New York* and *They Live*. Stevens had phoned Howarth on a whim about doing *The Haunted Caves* four years previously and wound up visiting the musician at his studio. Howarth liked the script for *Brutal* and delivered a chilling soundtrack.

In true indie fashion, Stevens has been distributing the film himself through the official website, [brutalmovie.net](http://brutalmovie.net), but a wider release seems imminent.

"I just went to the American Film Market and got it into the hands of all the bigger players, and our attorney is submitting it to *Lineage* and *Paramount*, so now we have a bigger shot with it. Wherever it goes, I'm just thrilled we got to do it."



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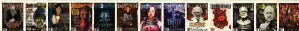
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REVIEWS BY TONY DRACONIS, MARK B. HANAU,  
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## SPIDERS 3D

Joseph Conlan

SOMNAMBULO RECORDS

The title may imply another cinematic quickie or track for a fast leap to home video, but Joseph Conlan has provided a mostly dead-sung score that seems more fitting for a summer blockbuster. Much of the music for *Tales of the Spiders 3D* consists of tedious tracks with deep, gutting bass notes and low brass—a nice touch, conveying both the grandeur of the creatures, as well as the dire plight of the characters—and each cue is part of a deliberate design to excite orchestral and kinetic tension for a cinematic battle. Conlan's build-ups consist of percussive rhythmic motifs, leaving no room for humanlike theme statements; this score is purely about the hunt. A few cues are slight homages to John Powell's blend of orchestra and techno (particularly in *The Killer Job*), but this is a really fun score, and one of the subwoofer-blendiest recordings in recent years. **MHH 3.5/5**



## RESIDENT EVIL: THE DARKSIDE CHRONICLES

Shusaku Uchiyama

SUMMIT ENT

Building on the industrial sound of the *Resident Evil* franchise, Shusaku Uchiyama mixes real and synthetic orchestra sounds for this lengthy two-CD portrait of Raccoon City. But while it's an exhaustive collection of score, source and vocal and choral cues, it's also a fairly uneven work. Part of the

problem stems from cues that start with a bang and trail to a frenetic action pace and then just... fade... out... making for an album that loses and ends up with sometimes fails come up with the goods. Additionally, the orchestral simulations that recall early '80s gear limit the score's scope and give the cues an unwanted sameness. Uchiyama steps away from extremes here, avoiding grunge, where discord or deep bass tonalities. The score's engineering is also woefully restricted to the mid-range, so while rare ambient and synth cues ("Pit's Cross") offer pleasing analogue tonalities, there's just no bass or resonance. **MHH 3.5/5**



## DEAD UNITED

Night Feature

AF Music/Contra Light

It's common to criticize horror punk "vokillists" for trying too hard to imitate Glenn Danzig, but in the case of Germany's *Dead United*, the band actually would have been better off doing just that. Instead, frenetic Buzzcocks sounds more like Jello Biafra, which we'll exactly the best approach if you're trying to add a ghostly vibe to the music. Apart from that imitation, *Dead United* is a fairly predictable, though still serviceable, horror punk outfit along the lines of *The Spoken and the Written*, with speed, melody and lots of sing-alongable songs that go bump in the two-in. The live-song 12-inch EP (also available for download) is the band's follow-up to 2007's *Chaos*. *Chronicles* and seems to embrace some kind of "concept" that involves having the word "night" appear in every single song title. For the record, "Hell at a Night" is a ball of a track, but the rest of this EP isn't much more inspiring than a zombie book display in the entrance to Barnes and Noble. **AVL 3/5**



## BMM

Between the Dead and Two Black Heerts

Chelsea Dan Records

Quietly haunting the LA area since 2004, Sean Bensen (isolated producer/mixer for Trent Reznor) and wife Juliette's BMM project is about as far away from the schizophrantic machinations of Nine Inch Nails as they could get. The title track is a dusty western-sounding tune with wildy drums and twanging guitars that has the duo trading vocals over a hypnotic, chant-like breakdown. "The Weight of Now" is a bluesy rock tune that brings slide guitars to the galloping sound of an impending four-horse apocalypse, while "Glimmering" conjures an ethereal 1980s goth vibe complete with eerie EVP recordings of a dead woman whispering, "He won't let me live." I wouldn't be surprised to come across these cuts on a show like *Doe*. *Black* is the kind of metaphoric horror where the lyrical "ghosts" are merely memories, not spooky specters from beyond the grave. With tight songs

and just 26 minutes of music, *Between the Dead and Two Black Heerts* ultimately spends too. The songs don't really mesh well with one another, and they're lyrically light on the night. BMM won't be shaking up my personal playlist anytime soon. **TD 3.5**



## YEAR OF THE GOAT

Angels' Necropolis

Yin Records

Just when you thought there was no more classic rock-inflected occult bands around the midnight line (see *Ghost*, *Blood Ceremony*, *Devil's Blood*, etc.), here comes Sweden's Year of the Goat with its debut full-length of hymns to the hooded one. Unlike certain, more tongue-in-cheek acts, Year of the Goat delivers its demonic message with utmost earnestness, as *Angels' Necropolis* opens a long, unholy tale that sees Jesus and the Father becoming Lucifer's brothers in Heaven. In musical terms, Year of the Goat's songs aim to draw the listener in with sweeping melodies and epic, progressive songs.

## BLACK SABBATH

Les Bander

Various Special Collections

Making its debut on CD—and running almost twice as long as the old LP—is Les Bander's most-here gothic score for Mario Bava's 1968 horror anthology. The first suite, "Drop of Water," is characterized by ongoing contrasts between sharp brass and grungy, whistling strings in a slightly beebop chamber orchestra, whereas for "The Telephone," Bander switches to a more contemporary jazz style, propelled by swarming brass and heavy bass lines, and a breezy tune that dances around the story's morose subject matter. The idiomatic shifts are almost seamless due to Bander's use of the same four-note motif, which goes from chamber to jazz and, in the finale, a full orchestra. The lengthy "Wasteland" is a perfect blend of the prior suites, and is rife for its colorful instrumental contrasts. Bava may not have appreciated AP replacing Roberto Nicolosi's original score, but Bander's more playful approach yielded one of his best gothic works. **MHH 4.5/5**



# LISTEN TO MY NIGHTMARE

**M**y name is Aaron Von Lupton, and I have a vinyl fetish. No, this isn't some bondage club confession, I just really, really love records. In fact, they're some of my most prized possessions, especially the horror soundtracks.

It all began — not surprisingly, given the title of my new column — with Alice Cooper. When I was about ten years old, a friend played *Constrictor* for me. Something about the way Cooper sang about splatter horror and wild sex appealed to me on the level that things typically appeal to pre-pubescent boys. What really caught my attention, though, was the synth track "Man Behind the Mask," which was the theme song to the then-most recent Friday the 13th movie. Jesse Lewis I hadn't quite gotten into horror movies yet because, truth is, they scared me to death, but that song got me interested in both renting them and, eventually, collecting their soundtracks.

tracks

I've amassed some pretty great records since then — including my original first and last copy of Cooper's *Perfumes for You*, outguttered by the blackletter himself — but the sweet, sweet vinyl versions I could resist are those original horror movie soundtracks. There's just something about having the music — really, the very soul of those amazing films — captured in cruddy, atmospheric vinyl and housed in eye-bet-pleasing art. My collection includes classic John Carpenter scores such as *Escape from New York* and *The Thing*, but I wish I could find more original Italian horror soundtracks.

This is why I love Cineplex Records, a small Austrian label dedicated to high-quality vinyl releases of music inspired by the glory days of Italian horror and exploitation, which just released the second volume of an album by Canadian act *Orgasmo Sceno* (roughly translated "Orgasmic Scenery"), titled *Revealing Obscene Film Music*. It's a slab of orange vinyl that came across my imaginary desk last year featuring reinterpretations of Fabio Frizzi's *Zombi 2*, Silvio Contino's *Nightmare City* and more.

Recently the label sent us some beautiful splatter vinyl releases, including a seven-inch titled *Druggie a Joe D'Amato e Marcello Giombini* that features covers of Marcello Giombini's themes from sleaze epics *Andropopulus* and *Erle Night of the Living Dead* (in RRR125 we reviewed the equally gorgeous 12-inch *Druggie a Loro Fuor e Falso* / *Non* by Alice Lorient and Alex Work). If the music itself doesn't impress you, the detailed packaging will, as it incorporates original stills, poster art and other promo materials.

Perhaps even more impressive are the 180 gram releases by instrumental acts *Thelma*, *Melobinla* and *Zofas*. Each group brings its own fuzzy concoit to completely original works inspired by the likes of *Itz Giallan*, *Gobles* and *Prizo* — similar to the early releases of Pittsburgh's *Zombi*. These weird, atmospheric records will evoke memories of the first time you heard the main theme from *Choblin's* *Conrad's* *Holocaust*, and are simply made for the analog format.

So if you share my vinyl addiction and want to learn more about Cineplex, visit [cineplexof.com](http://cineplexof.com) or look for years truly at the real *Alien* Movie event. There's nothing I love more public about more than sex. Well, except maybe *The Coop*.

AARON VON LUPTON

writing, perhaps not surprisingly drawing inspiration from Blue Öyster Cult. There's a dreamy quality to the music that will appeal to occult rock followers and the odd deady riff ("I'll Be Far You" is a killer track), but there's also a sanely pretentious and long-winded quality to *Angels'* *Metropolis*, which isn't exactly what one looks for when trying to get pumped up for a riteistic workout. *Satan* probably would not be played. **AVL 3.5**



## NEUROSIS

**Honor Found in Decay**  
Warner Records

It's been five years since post-metal soundcragers *Neurosis* last output, and on *Honor Found in Decay* the Oakland reunion men sound bigger than ever. Though it's only seven songs long, each track averages eight minutes of sheer sonic mass. Bringing in a range of sounds, from country folk to glacial guitar riffs and drums rumbling to more riteistic passages and awesettie loy-bears effects straight out of a John Carpenter film, the basic premise of *Honor* is the shifting dynamics from slow and beautiful to harsh and massive, without the songwriting ever becoming predictable or pedestrian. *Valens* are introduced on opener "Life All Rage in Gold" and closer "Rise the Dawn," creating a weird, foreign-sounding vibe. Because this is a *Neurosis* album, it will take a number of listens to digest it, especially since the band has never sounded more expansive, layered and technical. Another monstrous effort from one of the more challenging groups in the game. **AVL 5.5.5**



## ZOMBIFIED

**Carnage Slaughter and Death**  
Cineplex Envy

The grinding death noise of Sweden's *Zombified* is of a more serious nature

than most "new old-school" projects popping up these days that are eager to ape the sound of *Disembled* *Disember* and the early Swedish death metal school. *Zombified's* intensity is displayed primarily in the seasoned growls of bassist/vocalist Robert Karlsson, who has proven his metal pedigree with such diverse acts as *Scar Symmetry*, *Derelict*, *Firebreaker* and *Edge of Sanity*. The guitar work on *Carnage Slaughter and Death* is aggressive as well, especially considering this is only *Zombified's* sophomore release. *Prink* *Hansen* and *Par* *Franzen* ensure that their riffs are memorable without leaning into plagueson territory, while the drums of J. Johansson blast away with reckless abandon, locking into a drive-esque creep-creep-growl once again when needed. The growth of *Zombified* certainly have their collective fingers on the pulse of bowel-churning, world-ending death metal violence, and *Carnage Slaughter and Death* is a fitting first for this ambitious effort. **GP 5.5.5**

## DECEASED

**Supernatural Addiction**  
Hells Records

Hard to believe that it was over a decade ago that cult horror metal band *Deceased's* landmark album *Supernatural Addiction* was featured in *Audip Dyme*. And, as this review proves, it has aged surprisingly well. Compared to the blunt death metal approach of the *Virginians'* previous zombie concept album *Parasitic Unleashed* *Macabre*, this 2000 release has significantly more melody and songwriting depth, giving each one of these creepy tale-inspired songs an epic feel, and a unique sound belitting a band with such an underground, niche following. This disc includes five demo recordings that feature a wonderful rawness, augmenting *Deceased's* inherent punk and garage overtones. "Gick Chilling Heartbeat" based on Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" is a particular standout, and the rest of the bonus tracks bring in an equally cool edginess. That's not to say I would take the credits over the originals, but they do make a legitimately good reason to revisit this graveyard classic. **AVL 5.5.5**

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# DANGEROUS TOYS

**D**URING LAST YEAR'S TEXAS PRIMITIVE WEEKEND IN DALLAS, A FEW MEMBERS OF THE RUE CREW CAUGHT A SET BY A BAND THAT HAD REPORTEDLY GOTTEN SPLATTERING STAGS WITH BODILY FLUIDS—REAL AND SYNTHETIC, HUMAN AND ANIMAL—SINCE FORMING IN LATE 2006.

Smitty threw raw liver at a show one time and it got stuck between the stage and the wall. Apparently it smelled like death in there for a few months. He's done some pretty sick shit.

The band has also recreated scenes from horror movies during summer-out shows. How did you choose which films to pay tribute to?

**Seelye:** We've done three big ones. *Re-Animator*, because the green liquid in the springs looks strange in a club in the dark, especially when the dominant colour is black and red. *The Phantom of the Opera*, because I used to do an incredible amount of different makeup on myself, and I wanted to do the scene where Christine removes the mask and Erik goes berserk because of his appearance. *Lois Chaney, Sr.* is my biggest influence. And *Hellraiser*, because I wanted to come out of a mattress like Julia did in part two. That scene is prize.

**What's the best opening act the band has played?**

**Shan:** When we opened up for Michelle Graves at a local horror convention called Four Feet. It was at a hotel so, of course when Smiley started sawing a pig's head in half and throwing chunks of bloody raw meat, the people in charge of the convention got pretty angry. I'm not sure how, but some blood ended up being smeared on every toilet in the women's restroom. I'm not saying [band members] Helz or Rah might have had something to do with that, but they might have.

**Why is gritty horror, as the band's bio states, the group's "bread and butter?"**


**Skar:** Using horror and gore has always kind of helped us express the meaning of a song better. When we play, we feel like serial killers and just can't help acting it out.

**Swifty:** There's a saying that really separates us from any other slack rock band or theatrical group that has come before: We're like film directors in almost all horror films, you have the mirror scene in the bathroom—the one where someone looks at himself, then looks down or away, and when he looks back, something happens to scare the audience. Because that's such a horror cliché, it's the director's job to make it his own. Jesse James Dupont of Jaded's chainsaws checks. I chainsaw pig heads. Till Lindemann of Rammstein beats himself with a whip. I beat myself with a chain. . . . Everything has been done, a good horror director knows how to make it something fresh and new.

Have you ever run into trouble bringing such gruesome brutality to the stage?

**Sklar:** We have been banned from a couple of places in Texas. I remember

*If we gave you \$100,000 and told you to put on a show, what would you do?*

**Serinity:** I always wanted to just have free rein but keep it tasteful. I never wanted to do a Rob Zombie-, Alice Cooper- or Marilyn Manson-type of show. To me, that still has a traditional rock 'n' roll element. I want to strip that away and make it more sensual and Germane Expressionistic. All other horror bands remind me of Freddy Krueger: lots of energy and horror, but [just] a hint of fun. I want to be very cold and ancient, like the Cenobites. Just sensual and cold, but with a superior presence of true horror. 

## HORROR HOUND WEEKEND

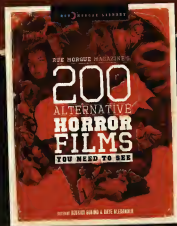


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# PLAY DEAD

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## ZOMBI

Wii  
Ubisoft

Now that survivor horror staples such as *Silent Hill* and *Resident Evil* have gone the action game route, becoming more about fight than fright, first-person WiiU odd ZombiU hopes to bring the genre back to its roots.

The 2012 Apocalypse has arrived in London in the form of a viral infection, and you play as a lonely survivor just trying to make it through. On your journey you'll encounter other survivors, including the "pripper," an army veteran who knew the end was coming, a scientist who's working to find a cure for the infection, and members of a secret society known as the Ravens of God. The story mixes science and ancient prophecy, but it all feels a bit thin as the main focus is ZombiU's empty survival.

This, however, is easier said than done. Ammo is scarce, and it usually takes several shots to put a walker down. You'll often find yourself resorting to your sturdy cricket bat, which takes even longer to work its magic, leading to more frustration than tension. When you die—and you will die often—you simply spawn as a new survivor at the same start point and continue the story from there. You do lose all of your equipment, however, meaning that you'll have to hunt down the



zombified remains of your previous survivor to get them back. The WiiU Gamepad is put to good use, acting not only as a map and inventory screen, but also used to pick locks, solve puzzles and loot corpses.

Multipayer mode is the real highlight of the game, though. One player acts as the zombie master—and uses the WiiU

Gamepad to place herds of zombies on the map, while the other player uses the WiiU mode or the pro controller to survive as long as possible against the increasing numbers of undead. Unfortunately, there's no online play.

ZombiU has some great ideas, but it could have used a bit more time in development to iron out the wrinkles.

**MIKE BEARDALL**



**REMARKS:** GOOD GRAPHICS FOR MULTIPLAYER  
**MINUS:** FRUSTRATING GAMEPLAY OUTSIDE THE FIVE-STAR MISSIONS



## HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA

WiiU/PS3/360  
Sony BMG Entertainment

What should you do when you're a vampire celebrating your 118th birthday at your dad's creepy hotel? How about going on a bunch of boring errands for the various guests who have checked in for the night? Sound like fun? I didn't think so.

Unfortunately, that's the premise behind this tie-in to the recently released animated movie of the same name. As Mavis, Dracula's daughter, you embark on an unprecedented number of chores, while trying to save the life of your life before he gets cooked up for your birthday dinner.

Rip it off the bat (get it?), this game is visually and stylistically reminiscent of the older Castlevania titles, especially *Symphony of the Night*. The graphics are decent and the controls are tight, but the 3-D gimmick isn't really needed, as it still looks good as a 2-D side-scroller. And although the fun bonus levels and some of the unlockable fas-



tunes—such as the ability to change into a bat or mael while stomping on zombies and skeletons—are pretty cool, it doesn't change the fact you're doing a long series of fetch quests where you'll find yourself going through the same rooms, hopping over the same pebbles and facing the same enemies over and over again.

It definitely feels like a rushed effort, with any additional potential all but squandered by an unimaginative development team. So before you make any reservations, see if there's a room available at the Salsa Motel just down the road.

**ANDREW LEE**



**REMARKS:** GOOD GRAPHICS THAT CHANNELS UP TO PLAY  
**MINUS:** BOREDOM BECOMES GAMEPLAY, IS IT THE REAL OFFENSE

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# CLASSIC CUT

## THE VAMPIRE: HIS KITH AND KIN

MONTAGUE SUMMERS ☠ UK — 1928

**I**n 1928, what do you know about vampires? Besides what you've learned from reading Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" or Polidor's *The Vampire*, that is? Thanks to those tales, and the many long-since-forgotten stories of gothic romance and horror they inspired, you are probably aware that there are creatures of the night that return from the dead to prey upon the living. But all the details modern readers have come to understand about "real-life" vampires — where they come from, how they transform, their powers and weaknesses, how to destroy them, and so on — were not yet part of the public conversation, or consciousness, until British academic Montague Summers published all known writings on the subject and published the handy guide *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin*.

Summers (1880-1949) was an eccentric, a religious man who embraced Catholicism yet was fascinated by the occult. He had already published his *History of Witchcraft and Demonology* and would present the first English translation of the infamous witch-hunting bible *Malicious Maleficium* in the same year he came out with, as he put it in the introduction, "the first serious study in English, of the vampire."

The book attempts to catalogue the whole of vampire folklore from both a philosophical and theological point of view. Summers believed the legends, you see, and took the subject very seriously indeed. And so *Kith and Kin* is a dense read, tracing the origins of the vampire back to the earliest examinations of body and soul, and various African tribes such as the Omani, who used staking and decapitation to prevent rebellious and other suspicious folk from rising up from their graves. You'll find references to Hungary's Blood Countess, Elizabeth Bathory, and Jack the Ripper, but most of what's covered is much more obscure: detailed accounts from newspapers and

academic journals of the day, and

correspondence from religious figures in the field.

Fluent in many languages, Summers included long passages from vampire texts in Latin, French and other tongues, without translation. It makes his book a frustrating slog at times, but back then allowed him to relate first-hand accounts of Greek *vykolakas* monsters or the Romanian *avijas* (if you were journeying to Russia, for example, you might very well have appreciated the detail that your stake should be of cedar for maximum effect.) The chapter on "The Vampire in Assyria, the East and Some Ancient Countries" is an exhaustive study of such creatures as the Mesopotamian *pessegges*, and even looks at the biblical figure of Lilith through vampire-obsessed eyes. This international approach gave Summers' project a scholarly lust that proved invaluable for researchers at the time and has since been republished in layman's terms in countless vampire guidebooks that line store shelves to this day. As someone who genuinely feared the power of the vampire, Summers often focused on the more frightful aspects of these stories, making multiple references to the blood, pain and screams pushing from vampire victims as they are dispatched by pious men.

Equally fascinating for fans of bloodsuckers in fiction, Summers' chapter on vampire literature ends with the publication of *Dracula*, and catalogue the many lesser-known poems, novels, dramas and operas that preceded it. In case you need to know the cost of a theatrical vampire play in Paris in the 1860s. He's quite dismissive of Stoker's story, actually, and its "careless writing" — a reminder that *Dracula* was not a critical or commercial success at the outset and that it's the popularity of vampires as a whole that has helped it become a genre classic. Summers' *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin*, and its follow-up, *The Vampire in Europe*, surely had just as much to do with feeding the public's fascination with this monster in the early 20th century. He would certainly be pleased were he alive to see how popular the vampire remains today.

LISA LAGACEER



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# HEXADECIMAL

